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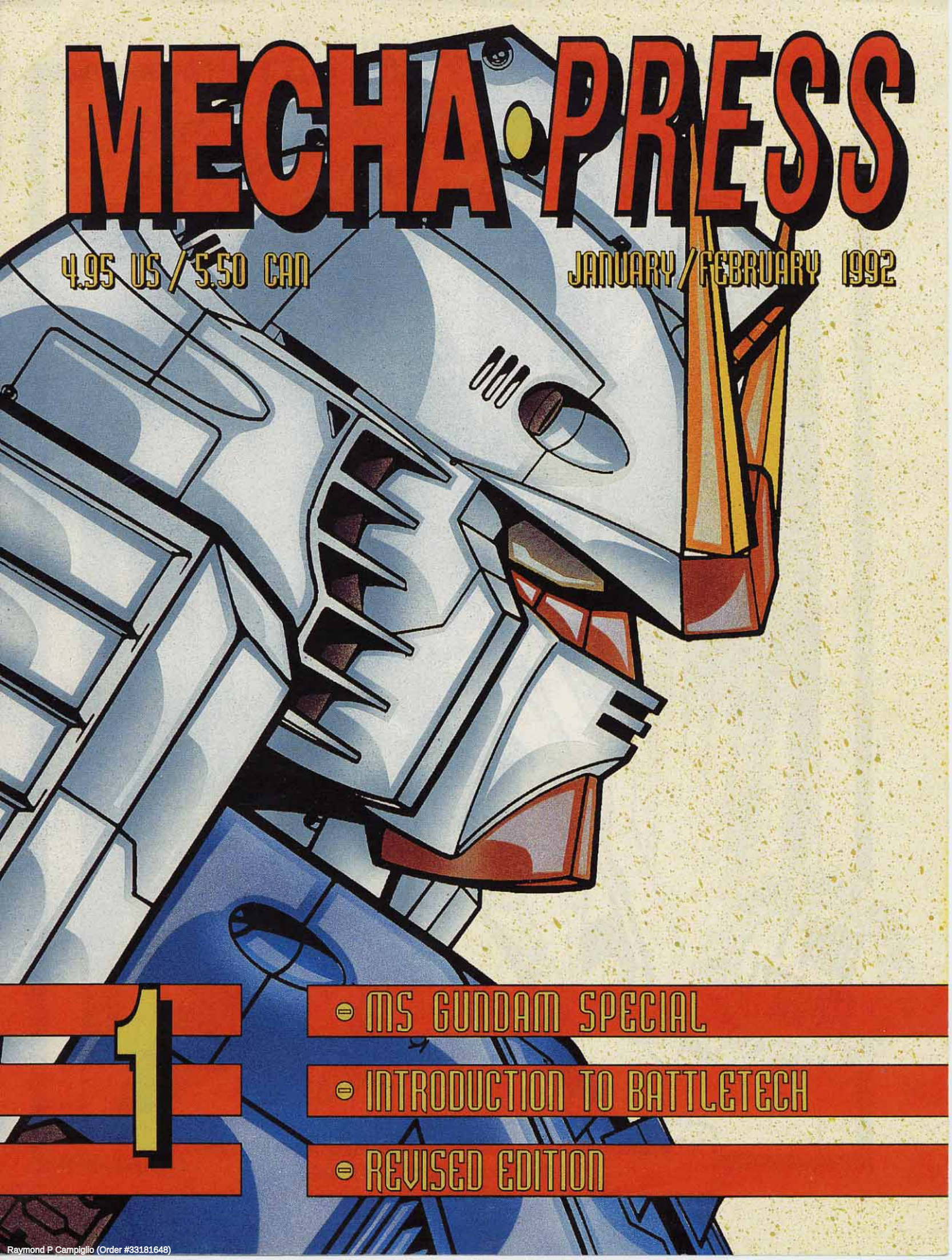

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- INTRODUCTION TO BATTLETECH
- REVISED EDITION

Raymond P Campiglio (Order #33181648)

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EDITORIAL

AND NOW FOR SOMETHING COMPLETLY DIFFERENT

by Etienne Gagnon

What you hold in your hands is the ultimate product of over a year of hard work and sweat (ours, thanks). In a certain way it is the collective baby of all the team that worked to produce it.

For us the months to come will be of the greatest importance. It will prove to us if the concept we had in mind was good and if it has a future. For this, the only thing we need is your support. (What hint?)

Anyway, we are very proud of this "Mecha Press the new number one" including a lot of revised articles, new ones, more information, new look (for those of you who bought the first first issues) and much much more!

When we had the idea for this magazine we all went "Yeah, it could be great" and, because we strongly believe it is important to live up to your dream, we put all our efforts in building something which will make us proud and you happy. That dream was to give animation fans the information they need on the games that allow them to play anime style and to also give gamers informations on a whole universe they can use to expand their games.

We think we achieved this goal pretty well . We are conscious that Mecha Press is still not perfect, far from it, but let's face it, it's good!

In a way, achieving a dream is something that does not happens often and it should be cherished for a long time to come. We started by loving Japanese animation and all the wonders it carried, so we decided to transmit to as many people as possible the same wonders we see in those animation we love. All our efforts in the last year were aimed toward this goal. For that we confronted distributors, printing companies, ourselves, reluctant computers, banks. Name it, we had to cope with it.

O.K, I know all my babling may not interest you very much but it was just so I could present to you our little product. I sincerely hope you will enjoy.

Until next time.
Etienne Gagnon.

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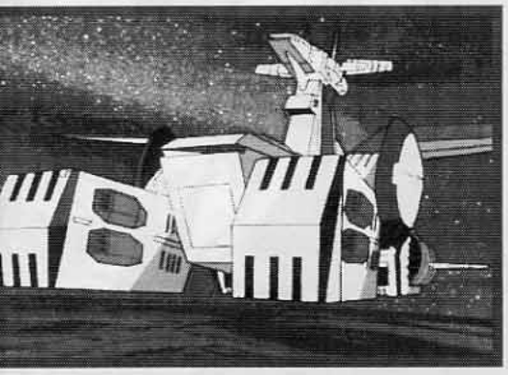
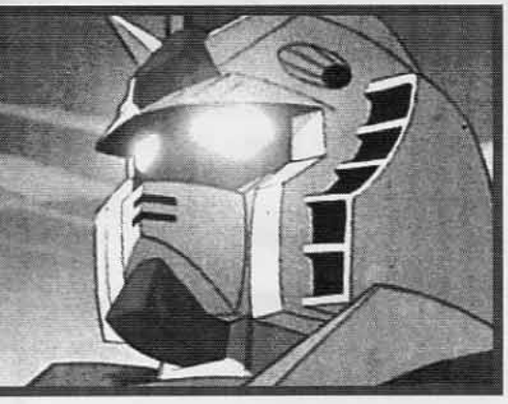
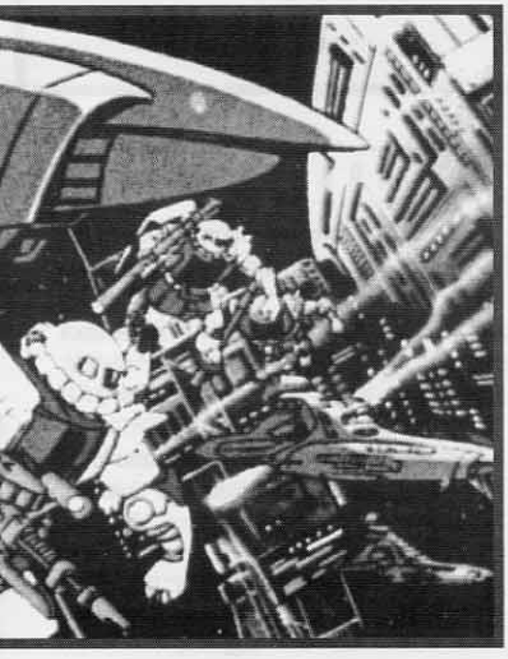
WHAT'S "GUNDAM"?

by Martin Ouellette







To understand the story and "raison d'être" behind Gundam, one must go back nearly thirty years, to the early 1960's and the start of the Japanese "Giant Robots" animation show tradition, "Tetsu Yin 28" being the first one. The base story being, 99.9% of the time, the struggle for power between good and evil in the style of: bad guys attack Tokyo (seemingly the only city on Earth!), killing a scientist in the process. Following that, the son or nephew of the scientist in question climbs into the brand new giant robot (with a suitably noble name, of course!) the dearly departed had just completed (in time for the invasion, it goes without saying!). Then he quite simply saves the world from destruction, while reading the instruction book, nonetheless!

But Yoshiyuki Tomino, an experienced animation director, was convinced that Japanese animation had more to offer. According to Frederik L. Schodt in his introduction to "Gundam MS I - AWAKENING (the first of a three books series on Gundam MS), Tomino was partly inspired by the 1959 novel by Robert Heinlein "Starship Troopers" when he created a brand new approach to the "robot shows" with "GUNDAM Mobile Suit". The Mobile Suit consists of a giant piloted mechanical suit, or exoskeleton, sporting sophisticated armament.

In Tomino's viewpoint, mechanical designers had to keep the limits of credibility and the laws of physics in mind while creating the designs. Named "mecha" or "Mobile Suit", these machines looked realistic and didn't have the "principal character" aura the robots before them had. Like the "mecha", the characters created for Gundam were much more complex than the ones from the earlier animations. He innovated in introducing characters which couldn't simply be considered good or bad. An example of this being the relationship between Char Aznable and Amuro Rey.

The first "Gundam MS" television series, in 1979, did not meet the rating expectations of Tomino at first, but ended up as "the" sensation of the early eighties in Japanese animation, helping the creation of many more "realistic" animation series like "Macross", "Southern cross", "Mospeada" and "Votoms", to name only a few. That success thus led, in 1985, to a second Gundam instalment titled "Zeta Gundam", followed by a third one in 1986, "Gundam Double Zeta". "Gundam MS" was re-edited for theatrical release in 1987 and in 1988, an original movie was released. This movie, titled "Nu Gundam: Char's counterattack" concluded the principal plot of Gundam, namely the clash of wills between Char Aznable and his federation nemesis, Amuro Rey (the Gundam pilot). In 1991, a new feature, "Gundam F91" began a new cycle. This time, Zeon is replaced by "Crossbones Vanguard" (which keeps Zeon's ideology and trademark uniforms). A new original video animation (O.V.A.) series titled "Gundam 0083: Stardust memories", is also in production at this very moment; this series follows the footsteps of "Gundam 0080: war in the pocket" O.V.A. series that was released in 1989. As in "0080", the mecha of "0083" are reworked versions of ancient designs, mainly the Zaku, Rick Dom, GM and of course the Gundam.

WHAT'S NEW

By Claude J. Pelletier

ROBOTECH: INVID WAR

Eternity will publish another Robotech comics. This time, it will be INVID WAR by Bill Spangler and Tim Eldred. It will be a 4-issue mini-series. The Robotech Masters have been defeated, but the cost was high. Earth is torn and in ruins. The last thing Earth needs is another alien invasion but that's exactly what it'll get. It should be interesting since this time-line (New Generation) is the most exciting after Macross. B&W. $2.50 US/ $3 Can.

ANIME EXPO 92

This year AnimeCon will be called Anime Expo '92: The International Animation and Manga Exposition. It will be held on July 3rd to July 6th at the Red Lion Hotel, San Jose, California. It is organized by The Society for the Promotion of Japanese Animation, in association with the founders of Cal-Animage, U.S. Renditions, L.A. Hero and Viz. The guests of honor are Haruhiko Mikimoto (character designer for MACROSS), Minoru Takanashi (producer for MACROSS II, GUNBUSTER, GUYVER), and Yoshiyuki Tomino (creator of GUNDAM). The american guests are Ben Dunn, Ken Iyadomi (LA Hero), Trish Ledoux & Toshi Yoshida (Animag), Robert Napton & David Riddick (US Renditions), John O'Donnell (US Manga Corps), Fred Schodt, Steve Wang (Guyver director), and Robert Woodhead (AnimEigo). For reservation at the Red Lion Hotel call (408) 453-4000. The room rates are (per night) $62, $69, $75, or $81 (respectively from single to quad occupency). Membership to the Expo is $40 'till June 1st and $45 at the door. Make checks payable to The Society for the Promotion of Japanese Animation. For more information, write to Anime Expo '92, 2425 B Channing, Suite 684, Berkeley, CA 94704, USA.

U. S. RENDITIONS

U.S. Renditions announced its video release schedule for 1992. In a cooperative venture with the L.A.-based company, L.A. Hero, U.S. Renditions will be releasing the following new titles: GUYVER, ORGUSS, and MACROSS II. In addition, U.S. renditions will continue with its popular DANGAIO series. All new titles will be **dubbed** into English and commercially released for the retail price of $24.95. Only DANGAIO 2 & 3 will be subtitled and released at the original price of $34.95.

GUYVER will feature 6 tapes with two episodes on each tape. The OVA series is based on the manga of the same name and features the exploits of a high school student who accidentally fuses with an alien armor and must battle corporate evil and mutated creatures in Japan.

SUPER DIMENSION CENTURY-ORGUSS will feature 12 tapes with three episodes on each tape (35 episodes total). The series was produced by the creators of MACROSS during the golden age of the transformable robot genre. Hal Mikimoto (co-producer of MACROSS) provided all character designs for this series which features characters, mecha, and action in the style of MACROSS, but is an uniquely original series.

MACROSS II will feature 3 tapes with two episodes on each tapes (6-episode OVA sequel). MACROSS II is a sequel to the original Japanese MACROSS saga (**not** its U.S. incarnation ROBOTECH). The story is a new generation adventure which picks up years after the original. New characters created by Hal Mikimoto highlight this MACROSS series for the 90s. Familiar elements from the original series appear including the SDF-01 Macross and upgraded versions of the popular Valkyrie mecha. This is one oft he most eagerly anticipated series of the last five years and will usher in a new era of MACROSS adventures.

DANGAIO 2 & 3 are separate OVA volumes each featuring one episode. Dangaio 2 features a 10-minute prologue which recounts the action in DANGAIO 1 (featuring new translation). The story centers around four young psychics and their psionic mecha: Dangaio!

The above mentionned tapes should be released at the end of July / early August.

THE GROXBLOX BOX

Groxblox, by Dark Tower, is the ultimate accessory Hex Map miniatures games. They feature the unique interlocking, stackable design, called Interstack, and are used to simulate different elevations of flight in aerial and space combat, and ground contours or levels, on a battlefield. Groxblox are perfect for use with all wargames using 3-D rules, including SILENT DEATH, BATTLETECH and MECHWARRIOR. It could also be an alternative to the combat pole system of MECHA! Available in 10 ($5.95), 25, and 50 packs, and in ten different colors. THE TUBE is a GroxBlox basic set combining Dark Tower's two most popular wargamming accessories. Each 37" TUBE comes with 2 Vision Scape maps and 25 GroxBlox ($32.95).

Raymond P. Campiglio (Order #33181648)

SEVENTH STREET GAMES

Everything seems to go well for 7SG, the publisher of MECHA! They released in January the first issue of a small quarterly newsletter, ACTION POINTS, to stay in touch with their fans. MECHA! is selling well in the USA, especially on all coasts where people get more exposure to Japanese anime. Sales are so strong that they have decided to take MECHA! to its second printing. SPIRIT WARRIOR EMPIRE, the sourcebook released in December, is also doing well: in less than a month they've sold half of the 2,000 copies printed. The look of the sourcebook could have been better but its $9.95 price is definitely very attractive. 7th Street is also releasing a miniatures line in April. Cast from resin instead of lead, these miniatures are larger than usual, but exactly the right scale for MECHA! Resin was used as casting material because of its light weight, the fact that it's easy to carve, and it's ecologically sound. They are cast in pieces (some assembly required) but this makes them posable. The price is quite low for a resin miniature, as it will probably range between $6 and $9.

U. S. MANGA CORPS

The leading anime supplier in America is bringing more video to us. U.S. Manga Corps has acquired from Toho International Company, Ltd. the North American distribution rights in all media to GALL FORCE. The series began with the theatrical release in 1986 of GALL FORCE: THE ETERNAL STORY. Due to its outstanding critical and commercial success, it was followed by three OVA sequels: DESTRUCTION, STARDUST WAR, and RHEA GALL FORCE. The title refers to the all-female "Gallant Force" space troops, who protect the universe from destruction at the hands of the invading Paranoids. Each of the programs has been released on video in Japan by Sony Music Entertainment (Japan) Inc., and has landed on the annual Japan Top Five Animation sales charts, as researched by ANIMAGE magazine. The character designs are from Kenichi Sonoda, and it is produced by Artmic, one of the most consistently creative animation think tanks in Japan. Its North American release is scheduled to start in the Summer of 1992.

GALL FORCE: THE ETERNAL STORY (Cat. #1033, 86 min.). In another part of the galaxy, two warring races (the Paranoids and the Solnoids) cross their ultra-technology weapons in mutual annihilation. The story centers on the seven member, all-female crew, the "Gallant Force" of the light assault cruiser STAR LEAF. These women must sacrifice all to save themselves and their partners from the depth of the treachery into which they are thrown!

GALL FORCE: DESTRUCTION (Cat #1034, 45 min.). Lufy, one of the members of the original "Gallant Force" from the STAR LEAF, is found floating in space, dead. She is brought on board a Solnoid light cruiser and successfully re-animated. Sadly, the galactic war has not slackened, but Lufy now has second thoughts about her position in life (death has a way of softening one's gung-ho attitude). Now, as the Solnoids lure the main body of the Paranoid fleet into System #9, Lufy and her new found allies attempt to stop the newest Solnoid Trump-Card: a massive sun-destroying energy cannon, hidden within an artificial planet!

GALL FORCE: STARDUST WAR (Cat #1035, 60 min.). The Gallant Force members escape punishment for their insubordination and discover that they have a very highly placed ally: Catty Nebulat! This high official in the Solnoid army is the model on which all the Catty androids are based. She is racing against time to finish her great project: using the latest hyper-technology to bring life to a lifeless world. But neither the Solnoids or the Paranoids are particularly interested in listening to anything except the sounds of their own guns.

RHEA GALL FORCE (Cat #1036, 60 min.). Discovering the assorted fragments of the leftover alien civilization who were Mankind's progenitors, the people of Near-Future Earth learn firsthand how deadly it can be. With the Neo-Paranoid machine stationed on the Moon and in complete control of the air on Earth, small guerilla groups mount an armed resistance, and challenge the superior Neo-Paranoid forces. While the battles rage on Earth, the splintered command structure itself comes under attack, and all looks lost as the battle cannot be won without a unified front.

US Manga Corps has just announced a special 800# for credit card customers (800-833-7456 for Visa and Mastercard). This number is not available in Canada.

USMC GOES LASER! U.S. Manga Corps has announced that it has signed a contract with Image Entertainment to release three classic anime titles on laser disc. Starting in Summer, 1992, laser discs will be available for DOMINION and PROJECT A-KO, with GALL FORCE: ETERNAL STORY, to follow in the fall. DOMINION will be released as a four episode, two-disc set, while A-KO and GALL FORCE will be single discs.

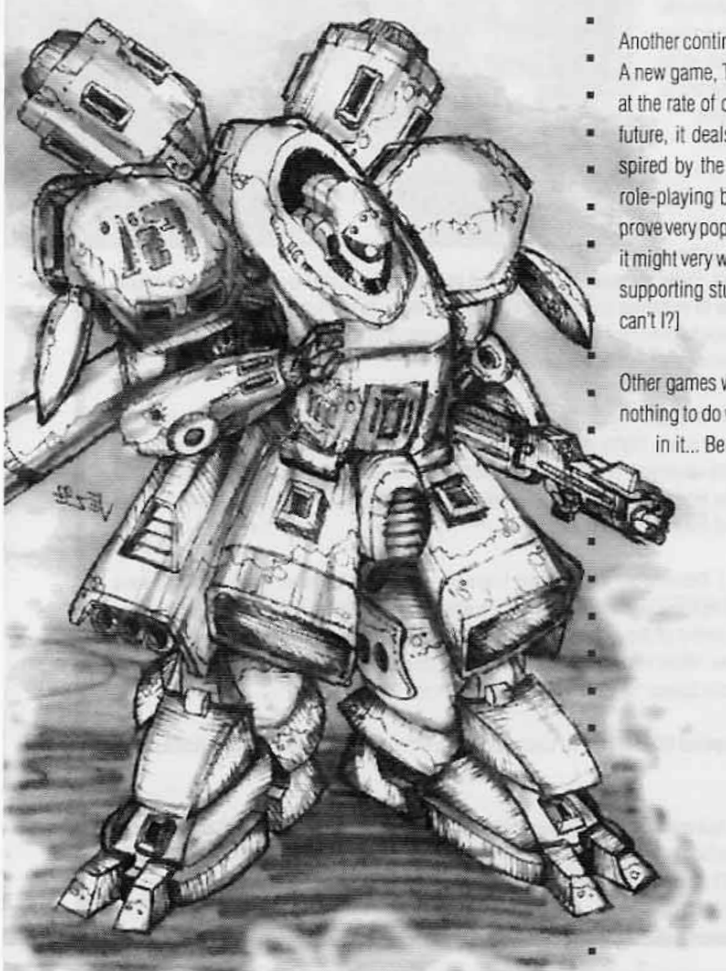
HI-TECH MECHA GAMING

by Marc-Alex Vézina

In the following months, this section of Mecha-Press will be devoted to the numerous games involving mecha and other hi-tech marvels. We will try to address as many interests as possible by presenting articles on all the major existing games (and quite a few minor ones).

BATTLETECH is one of the best known game systems and as such, it is one of the most fully developed. We will approach it in some new and creative ways: you just might be surprised...

Mekton is a little less known. Published by R.Talsorian Games Inc., it is unique because it is an almost perfect blend of roleplaying and wargaming, combining the best of both worlds. And more to the point, it is patterned after the world of Japanese anime!



The system consists of a series of three softcover books: Mekton II, Roadstriker II and Mekton Empire. A small supplement called Mekton Advanced Combat was published back in 1987, but is extraordinarily rare. A new and better supplement called Mekton Technical System is on the way, but the details have not reached us in time for this issue.

The originality of the game is that it can be used to recreate almost any animation show you like. The system is very flexible and generalized, yet clear enough to permit precise and fast play.

Another point of interest lies in the "attack/defense" dual roll for most situations. Instead of just rolling one or more dice to do something, you check your basic ability to do the task, then add the result of a ten sided dice. Your opponent (or the gamemaster) does exactly the same, and the highest score wins. That means that a very hot pilot can actually be impossible to hit (at least by rookie mechajocks), because chance is only a small factor. This enables the recreation of very "Japanimation-type" battles. Since there is much that is not covered in the rules, this will be the subject of an almost regular series in our pages. New rules, mecha and vehicle designs, new personal equipment for the heroes, character design and even (perhaps, maybe) some scenarios!

Another continuing series will be TechnoPolice 2100 AD. A new game, TechnoPolice will be presented in sections at the rate of one section per issue. Set in a utopian (?!) future, it deals with counter-terrorist actions and is inspired by the Appleseed manga. Fast-paced, not quite role-playing but much more than wargaming, it should prove very popular. And if demand warrants (plug, plug...), it might very well be released in softcover book form, with supporting stuff like miniatures... [Oh well, I can dream, can't I?]

Other games will also be featured. Some have absolutely nothing to do with mecha. That is, before we put our nose in it... Be prepared for absolute mayhem!

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MECHA DESIGNS ADAPTATION FOR MEKTON

by Marc-Alex Vézina

To launch our mecha gaming section, we present our first mecha adaptation for Mekton. We chose the Armored Legioss from Genesis Climber Mospeada.

Some people will find that my calculations are incorrect: "Ha! He 's gonna tell us how to build a mecha and he doesn't even know how to count!" Well, that's not true. It works when you use the new rules which will be published in Mecha-Press #2. You also have to ignore the space requirements for the missile packs, but that's not stretching the rules too far.

ARMORED SOLDIER LEGIOSS AFC-01

NAME: ..... ARMORED SOLDIER LEGIOSS AFC-01
TONNAGE: 16.7
WEIGHT MULTIPLIER: 1
TECH MULTIPLIER: 3
CPS: 85

GROUND MA: 8
FLIGHT MA: 17 (23)
MV: ..... -1

COMPONENTS

NAME	LEVEL	ARMOR
POWER PLANT	SL	-
MAIN BODY	LW	SL
HEAD	SL	SL
ARM+HAND (2)	SL	SL
LEG (2)	SL	SL
WING (2)	SL	SL

EQUIPMENT

NAME	LOC	REMARK
FLIGHT SYSTEM	LL,RL	JET
STORAGE MODULE	MB	-

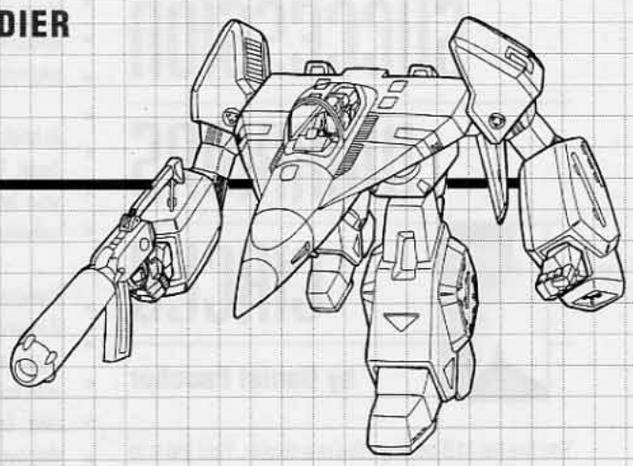
REMARK(S)

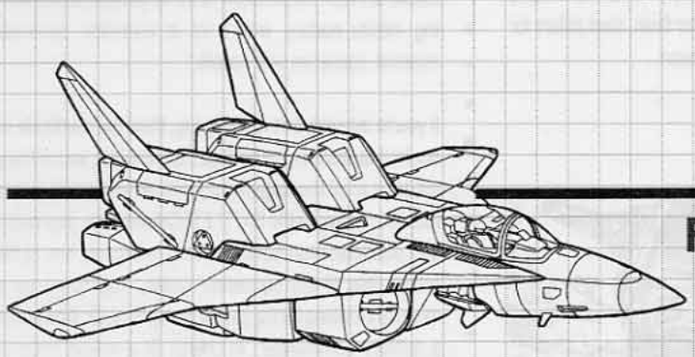
TRANSFORMS TO WALKERMECHA OR MECHAFIGHTER

AFC-01 ARMORED SOLDIER

LEGIOSS

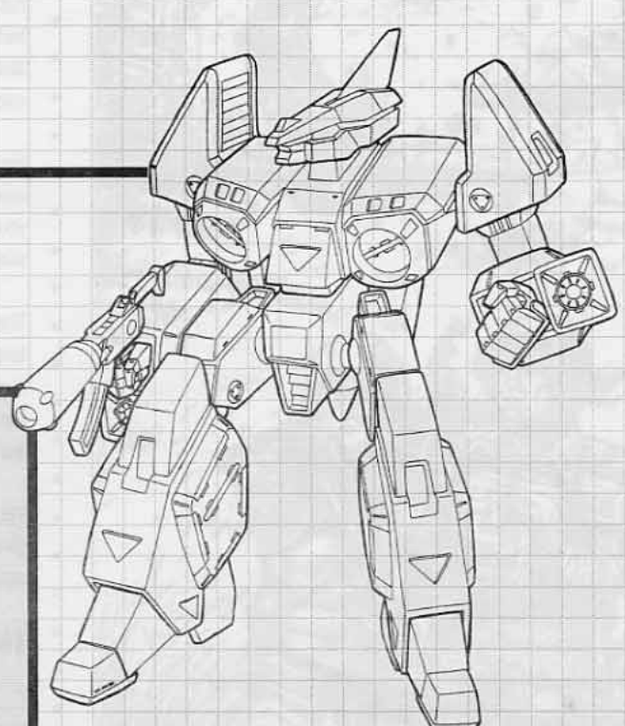
WALKER MODE





FIGHTER MODE

SOLDIER MODE



WEAPONS

NAME	LOC	REMARK
MACHINE CANNON	RA	-
MISSILE RACK	LL	-
MISSILE RACK	RL	-
MISSILE RACK	LA	-
MISSILE RACK	RA	-
MISSILE RACK	MB	-

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SUCCESSION WARRIORS CIRCLE

by Daniel Faucher

You live the 31st century. You're a soldier. Your job is to pilot one of the most sophisticated pieces of machinery that has ever been built.

Your life depends upon a reasonably humanoid shaped vehicle that has a ceramic armor for flesh, steel pillars for bones and a fusion reactor as a heart.

Your success depends on your ability to maximize the effectiveness of weapons like lasers, missiles, particle projector cannons and rapid-fire autocannons.

In brief, you are a futuristic knight that rides in a cold steel beast. The name of your job: MechWarrior. The name of your beast: BattleMech. Welcome to the BATTLETECH universe!

If you recognized yourself when reading the previous text, it means that you ARE a MechWarrior. On the other hand, if you haven't seen your reflection in the previous description, you could simply elect to skip this chronicle. However, by doing so, youre going to miss a chance to discover one of the most beautiful and well crafted universe that exists for gaming.

"Why is that so?", you might be asking. Well, BATTLETECH, thanks to FASA Corporation, is the largest game concerning *mecha* warfare, with a lot of historical, technical material, scenarios and novels.

If you're interested in role playing, there are multitude of books that describe the political, economical, and military situation of all the major forces with an active role in this futuristic game. In the BATTLETECH universe, you could be a politician plotting and bribing to become one of the ruling elite of the successor states. You could be a merchant looking for the deal of the century. Or, how about a military commander, in charge of a mixed force of infantry platoons, armored vehicles, BattleMechs, and AeroSpace fighters, trying to overcome an enemy assault on your planet.

Furthermore, you could be a scout, a spy, a doctor, a technician, an AeroSpace pilot, a Comstar adept, etc. In fact, with MechWarrior Second Edition, the BattleTech role playing game, the only limits are your imagination.

However, there is one profession that should be considered first. Since the game revolves around BattleMechs, you should take part of the action and become a BattleMech pilot : a MechWarrior.

The MechWarrior is the heart and soul of every military force in BATTLETECH. Consequently, since there are always some important battles going on in this universe, the player who chooses to be a MechWarrior will always see action.

Yet, only the toughest, the most skillful, the most intelligent and the strongest personality will succeed to legendery status. The question is: do you have what it takes?

There's only one way to find out.

BATTLETECH: THE BASIC GAME

The FASA Corporation package titled "BATTLETECH a Game of Armored Combat" is what you absolutely need to get started. It contains color counters of 'Mechs, game maps, dice, and the most important thing of all, the rulebook.

If FASA could have packaged a training instructor with every rule book, a modern day military drill sergeant, the loud introduction would be something like this : Welcome to the BATTLETECH training center! We are going to teach you all the lore regarding the ultimate in modern warfare. Were going to train you to become a MechWarrior.

In this game, youre a MechWarrior, a *mecha* pilot. In BATTLETECH, *mecha* are known as BattleMechs, or 'Mechs for short. Their weight ranges between 20 and 100 tons, but construction rules allow for 10 and 15 tons 'Mechs as well. These 'Mechs resemble the GUNDAM Mobile Suits, except that the later are much, much bigger.The BattleMechs carry lasers, missiles, particle projectionr cannons and rapid-fire autocannons.

The game's focus is the 'Mech-vs-'Mech fights. Ha, ha! This is another hack and slash type of game. Obviously ! Please understand that any military type of game involves some hack and slash combat at one point or another. But, BATTLETECH is a game where strategies and tactics can be far more important than reckless combat based on sheer luck. You will come to realize, after a while, that the advantage in weight and fire power that a BattleMech has over another doesn't automatically assure victory. A better understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of your 'Mech and that of your opponent's would be more apt to give you a victory. Furthermore, since you can't win all battles, this knowledge will certainly help you make better decisions towards diminishing your losses. Knowledge comes only with experience, and experience comes from the battlefield.

Inside the book included in the BATTLETECH package, you will find the basic rules. The package offers you a board game that is simple enough for to learn quickly, complete enough so that theres no need to buy anything else to start with and brilliant enough to justify spending extra time on your strategic and tactical decisions. You dont have to worry about learning all the rules immediatly, the rules booklet will provide you with more when you need it.. Instead, you can simply enjoy playing a fast and fun one-night game. As FASA points out : " Just Play It ! "

Raymond P Campiglio (Order #33181648)

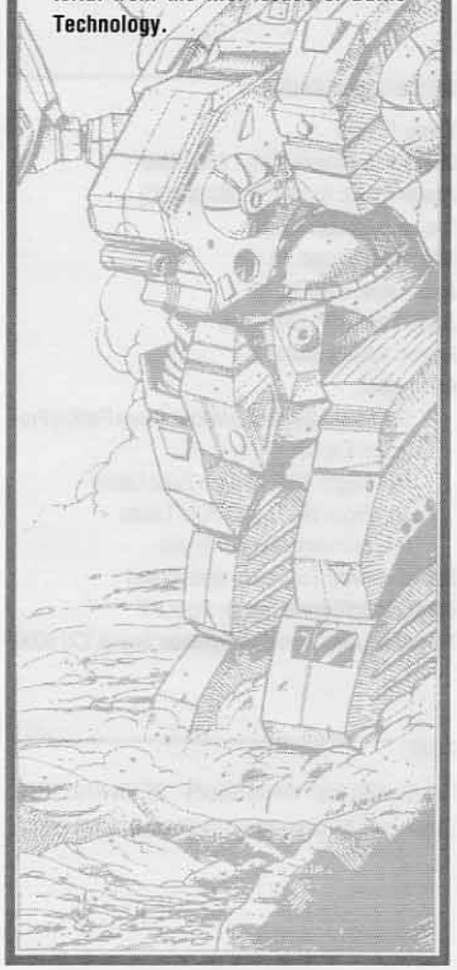
NEWS FROM FASA

BATTLETECH 3RD EDITION

FASA Corps announced for June the 3rd edition of the BATTLETECH game. This edition will keep the game in the 3025 universe, however, the rules are updated to make them compatible with the Battletech compendium.

BATTLETECHNOLOGY

Pacific Rim, who published BATTLETECHNOLOGY and ANIMAG, released in May a book called: BATTLETECHNOLOGY: THE LOST ISSUES. This 144-page perfect bound supplement is approved by FASA as official Battletech material. It contain information, data, and personal glimpses of the time before the Clan Wars, including the original issue of Battletechnology. This is reprinted material from the first issues of Battle Technology.



MECHA DESIGNS AND MODIFICATIONS

by Stephane Matis

We proudly present our first newly designed BattleMech, created with our optional modification to the construction rules. The design, called the CAVALIER, is based on the Japanimation *mecha* from the MS GUNDAM series: the RX-78 Perfect GUNDAM.

OPTIONAL RULES

THE SHIELD

The Cavalier's Shield was specially conceived to take advantage of the GUNDAM look. The rule governing shields follows.

- The shield weighs 2 tons for each 15 tons, or fraction thereof, that the BattleMech weighs. It also takes up one critical space in the arm for every 15 tons. This gives the 90 ton Cavalier a 12 ton Shield that occupies 6 criticals in the one arm.
- The shields internal structure is the same as twice the shields weight. In our example, the Cavalier's shield has 24 internal structure points, allowing it to carry 48 points of armor. Full armor is included in the weight.
- The shield also has room to carry mines, hidden and protected. For every 30 tons of the 'Mech, or fractions thereof, the shield has room for a mine. In this case, the Cavalier's shield carries 3 mines of various type.

HOW TO USE THE SHIELD.

Every time that your 'Mech gets hit in one of the following locations : the shield carrying arm, the front torso or the head, another die roll should be made. This roll determines if the shot hit the predetermined location or the shield. The attacking player should roll one die and interpret the result on the table. Damage applies to the shield in the same fashion as explained in the BATTLETECH rulebook. Excess damage to the shield is applied to the shield carrying arm's armor. Note : The shield is NOT detachable without technicians.

LOCATION IDENTIFIER

1. Shield intercepts
2. Original location
3. Original location +1 (max 12)
4. Original location -1 (min 2)
5. Shield intercepts
6. Shield intercepts

If a Torso critical is rolled and the shield intercepted the shot, there is still a chance for severe damage. Roll one die and consult the table below for effect.

1. Critical hit has no effect. Apply damage normally.
2. Double damage.
3. The mine release mechanism is jammed.
4. The mine arming and control system shorts out.
5. The shield connection breaks and the arm suffers1D6 internal damage. The shield falls to the ground in the current hex. There goes your extra protection!
6. All mines detetonate. Apply damage directly to the shield carrying arm's armor first. Damage transfers normally.

MINES

There are three types of mine that can fit into the shields mechanism. The traditional command detonated mine, the Vibrabomb and the electro magnetic pulse (EMP) mine. They all require to be armed before release. This operation can be performed in one BattleTech turn or each step requires one incidental action per turn in Solaris VII scale.

Once released, the mine can occupy any hex in the front arc of the BattleMech. The rules on mines, except for the EMP, can be found in the BATTLETECH Compendium, page 60. For EMP mines, use the Vibrabomb rules, except when the mine detonates, roll 2D6 for each 'Mech in the same hex for BattleTech scale or the same hex and surounding hexes for Solaris VII. On a 7 or higher, the unit is shut down for 1D6 turns, until the battle computer and sensors reset. If the 'Mech was moving, the MechWarrior needs to roll versus his Piloting Skill. The mine generates no actual damage, but falling damage applies.

COST

Being a very new technology, the shield costs a whole lot. Current pricing is 20,000 C-bills per ton of the shield weight. A more advanced, field detachable model is expected shortly, but the cost will soar to 50,000 C-bills per ton.

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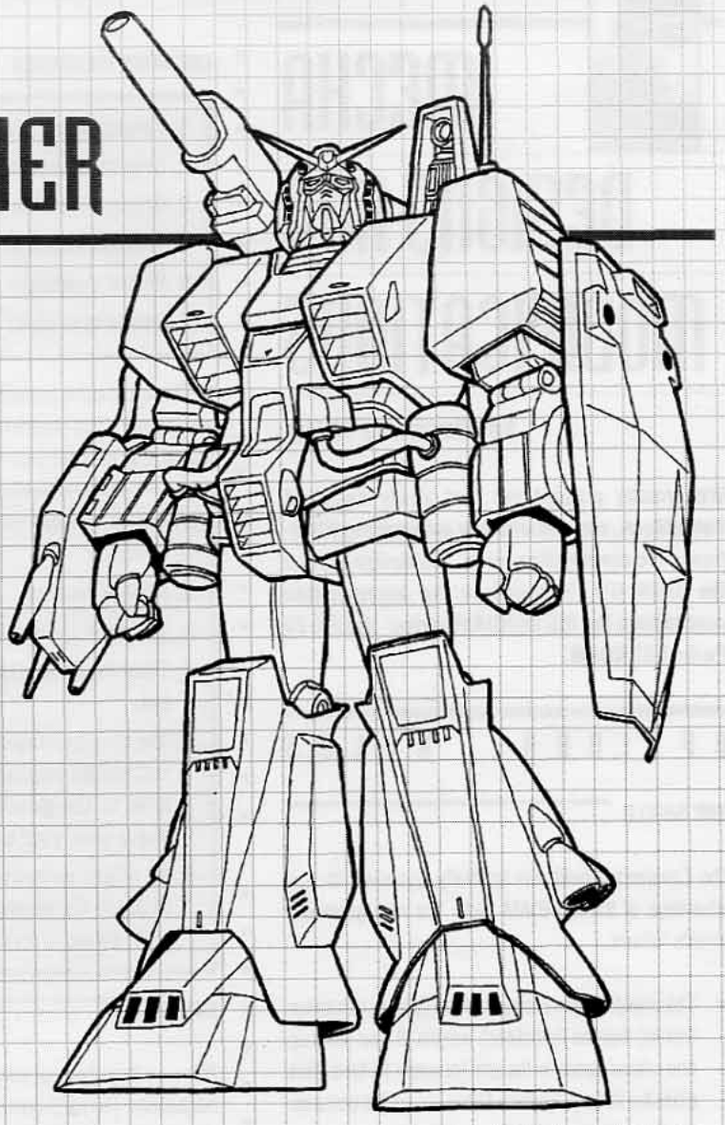
CVL-8RD

CAVALIER



OVERVIEW

The Cavalier is an Assault BattleMech targeted for Solaris VII arena fights. The design is optimum for close combat with two medium pulse lasers and six small pulse lasers. It only carries one long range weapon: an extended range PPC. Exceptional speed for such a large 'Mech, the Cavalier is also jump capable and has the advanced MASC system installed for even quicker charges and retreats. What sets the Cavalier appart from other 'Mechs, even those designed for Solaris VII combat, is the use of the shield. The shield allows the Cavalier to intercept shots and physical blows, giving the pilot an edge in defense. The mines hidden on the reverse side of the shield also add to the Cavalier's notoriety. During a recent Open Class event, an EMP mine was used by upcoming celebrity MechWarrior Terrence Huse, a pilot working for the White Hand stable. Where the stable aquired such rare mine is still a mystery.

TECHNICAL READOUT

Mass: 90 tons
Chassis: Earthwerks CVL 1 Endo Steel
Power Plant: Hermes XL 360 (MASC)
Cruising Speed: 43 kph
Maximum Speed: 65 kph
Jump Jets: Rawlings 75
Jump Capacity: 120 meters
Armor: Valliant Gauntlet
Armament:
One Magna Sunspot Extended-Range Particle Projection Cannon
Two Magna 400P Medium Pulse Lasers
Six Magna 200P Small Pulse Lasers
One Earthwerks Cavalier Shield
Manufacturer: Earthwerks Incorporated
Communications System: Irian UHF
Targeting And Tracking System: Swytek ICU 6000

COST:

Cavalier 8RD (Permament Shield) 26,134,310 C-Bills
Cavalier 8RDN (Disposable Shield) 26,818,310 C-Bills

TYPE: CVL-8RD CAVALIER

Equipment		Mass
Internal Structure:		4.5
Engine:	Hermes 360 XL	16.5
Walking MPs:	4 (8)	
Running MPs:	6 (8)	
Jumping MPs:	4	
Heat Sinks:	14 (28)	4
Gyro:		4
Cockpit:		3
Armor Factor:	256	16

	Internal Structure	*Armor Value*
Head:	3	9
Center Torso:	29	33/24
Rt./Lt. Torso:	19	20/16
Rt./Lt. Arm:	15	28
Rt./Lt. Leg:	19	31

WEAPONS AND AMMO:

Type	Loc	Critical	Tonnage
Shield (AF 48)	LA	6	12
ER PPC	RT	3	7
MASC	LT	5	5
Med Pulse Laser	RA	1	2
Med Pulse Laser	RA	1	2
Small Pulse Laser	RT	1	1
Small Pulse Laser	RT	1	1
Small Pulse Laser	RT	1	1
Small Pulse Laser	LT	1	1
Small Pulse Laser	LT	1	1
Small Pulse Laser	LT	1	1
Jump Jets	LL	2	4
Jump Jets	RL	2	4

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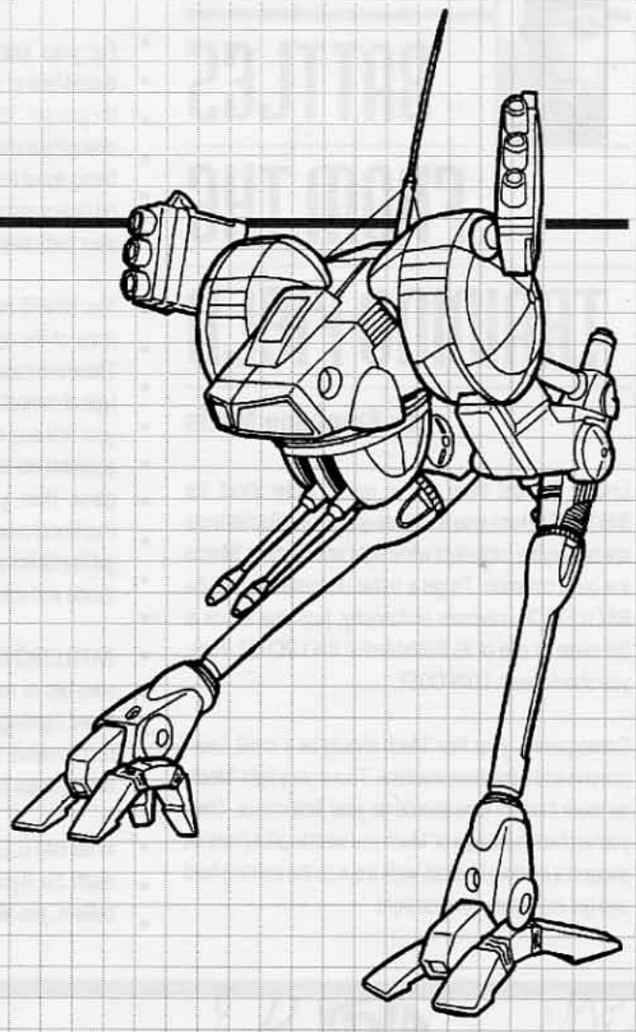
Raymond P Campiglia (Order #23181648)

LCT-2MP

LOCUST



OVERVIEW

The Locust, in it's original configuration, was a scout with very little combat capaility. To correct this weakness, Bander BattleMechs modified the Locust's chassis to incorporate a lighter XL engine. They also removed the two machineguns and their ammo. These weight saving allowed them to add a second Martell medium laser, effectively doubling the Mech's firepower. An interesting feature is the Arrowlite split-configuration SRM 6-pack. It is similar in all respects to a conventional SRM-6, except that the missile tubes are split into two different locations. The reload ammunition is also split into two areas, where the extra feeding mechanisms require a critical location on each side. Note, if one side is destroyed, then the entire SRM is disabled. Ammo explosions only count for the number of missiles in the area affected.

TECHNICAL READOUT

Mass: 20 Tons
Chassis: Bergan VIIB
Power Plant: HMR 180 XL
Cruising Speed: 97.2 kph
Maximum Speed: 151.2 kph
Jump Jets: None
Jump Capacity: 0
Armor: Vaillant Buckler
Armament:
Two Martell Medium Lasers
One Arrowlite Split-Configuration SRM 6-Pack
Manufacturer: Bergan Industries
Refit: Bander BattleMechs
Primary Factory: Terra Firma
Communications System: Winston Silicon Siren
Targeting and Tracking System: Winston Coral Snake

COST:

Locust 2MP: 2,527,200 C-Bills

The split-configuration missile system was originally designed to be used with the optional missile rules that will appear in an upcoming issue.

In Mecha-Press #3, we will supply another Mech designed specifically for Solaris VII arena fights. It will be a unique, and most terrifying mecha: the Templar.

TYPE: LCT-2MP LOCUST

Equipment		Mass
Internal Structure		2
Engine:	HMR 180 XL	3.5
Walking MP:	9	
Running MP:	14	
Jumping MP:	0	
Heat Sinks:	10	0
Gyros:		2
Cockpit:		3
Armor Factor:	63	3.5

	Internal Structure	Armor Value
Head:	3	8
Center Torso:	6	9/2
Rt./Lt. Torso:	5	7/2
Rt./Lt. Arm:	3	5
Rt./Lt. Leg:	4	8

WEAPONS AND AMMO:

Type		Loc	Critical	Tonnage
Medium Laser		CT	1	1
Medium Laser		CT	1	1
SRM 6	Split	RA	1	1.5
		LA	1	1.5
Ammo (SRM)	8	RT	1	0.5
	8	LT	1	0.5

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BATTLES FROM THE TRAINING FIELD

by Stephane Matis

One of the first thing you've got to know about the BATTLETECH universe is that heavy or assault BattleMechs are rare on the battlefield while light and medium 'Mechs are quite common. To get a better understanding of the BATTLETECH universes philosophy, just have a look at the name of one of its BattleMechs: the LOCUST. Here, you should read: LOW COST.

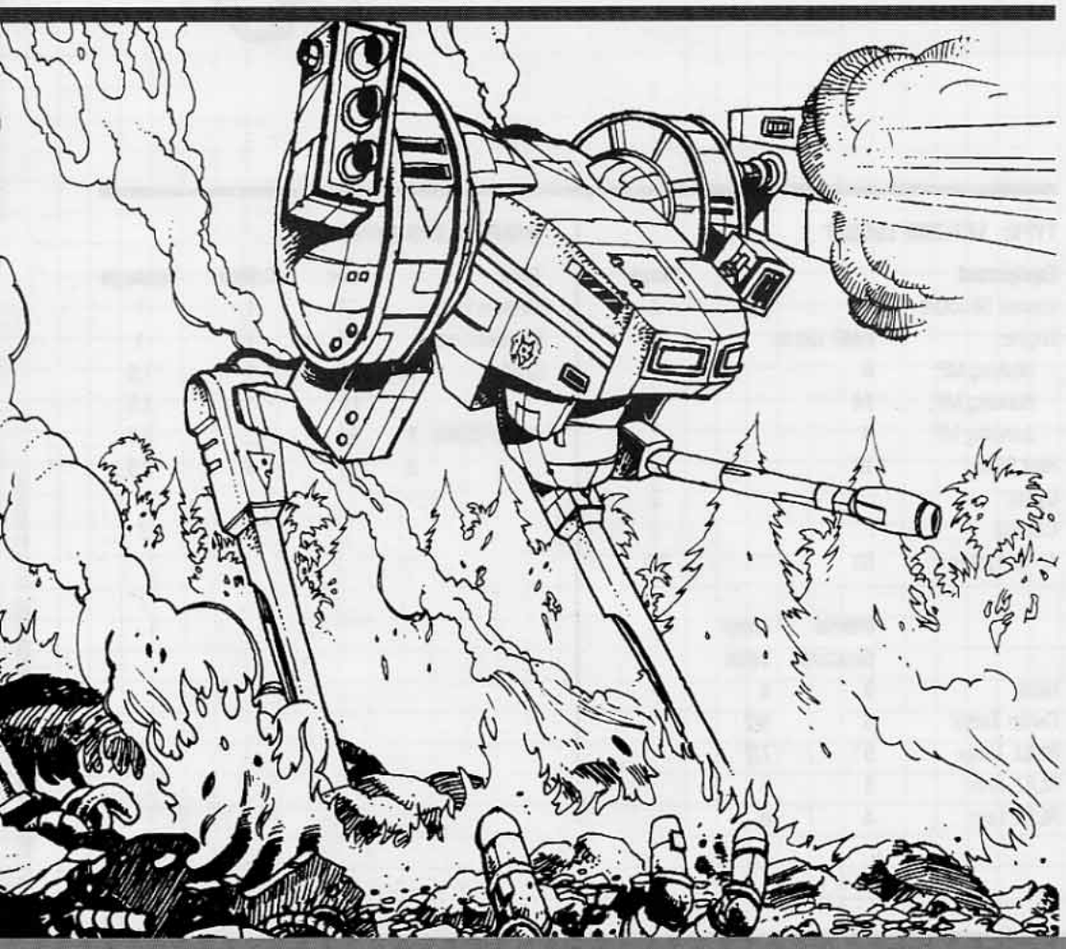
Consequently, your first 'Mech should be a small, inexpensive and a common machine. Therefore a light 'Mech, no more than 35 tons should be your first choice. Once you've chosen the type of 'Mech you wish to pilot (here we suggest a random choice), walk it out on the training field and get ready for your first fight.

For your first battle, your opponent should pilot a BattleMech of the same type as the one you have chosen for yourself. This will help both of you realize quickly the strengths and weaknesses of your 'Mech. Also, the 'Mechs being equal to one another should help you to rely more on tactics and strategies than on the overall superiority of your particular BatlleMech model.

You should repeat the same combat a few times, until none of the opponents can achieve a decisive victory. These combats don't always have to take place in the same type of combat environment. For example, you could fight your first duel on an open field, giving you a chance to get accustomed to the moving and targeting rules of the game. Then, your second duel could take place on the traditional mixed wood-and-open field, where you would get to practice all the other rules. Other duels can be fought inside and around cities or on mountainous fields.

BATTLETECHis similar to playing chess except that you have two or more pieces facing each other on the game board, fighting according to a more varied set of rules. We recommend staying away from excessivly large battlegroups (over 12 'Mechs) until you are adept.

In the BATTLETECH universe, the price of defeat is often death. So, if you play the game and loose, it's ok. In make-believe, you always have the next time!



OPTIONAL RULES

Many players appreciate added realism in a game, so do we. Therefore, we propose some optional rules to enhance your BattleTech games. You should first become accustomed to the basic rules of BATTLETECH before you add all the expert or optional rules.

HIDDEN MOVEMENT

When playing on a field that features trees, mountains or buildings, it isn't always obvious if a 'Mech can or cannot see another 'Mech. Furthermore, once it has been determined that the machines cannot see each other, each player is supposed to lose sight of the opposite players playing piece. Consequently, you're facing a situation where player conflicts could emerge. To prevent this situation from happening, you can introduce a rule for hidden movement.

To begin, let's take a look at the rule concerning line-of-sight. The rule specifies that almost anything which stands as tall or taller than a BattleMech blocks the LOS (Line-Of-Sight). The list of such objects contains : woods, mountains, buildings, DropShips etc...

Woods only block LOS whenever there is three light wood hexes [or greater] in between BattleMechs. By the rules, they are hidden from each other, but reading one of the BATTLETECH novels, you learn that 'Mechs are equipped with a MAG SCAN. The function of that piece of equipment is to detect any concentration of metal. Since 'Mechs are constructed with all sorts of different metals, they appear on the monitor of the scanner, giving away their current position. Thereby, you don't need an hidden movement rule to take over in this situation.

Mountains have different levels of elevation and a mountain of an elevation of two and higher, blocks the LOS of a 'Mech. MAG SCAN, according to what we have read, does not always work properly when used to detect a BattleMech through a hill, a mountain or a mound of rocks. Consequently, it creates a perfect situation for hidden movement.

Finally, buildings,DropShips and other such *installations* have the same effect on the LOS as mountains, but they don't affect the MAG SCAN in the same way. The effectiveness of the scanner depends on the concentration of metal in the *installation* and the frequency of such *installations*. So, the more buildings you'll find, the less effective your device will become. Therefore, if a combat takes place in a major industrial city, full of Heavy and Hardened factories and other such buildings, the scanner will simply go wild and become useless. Again, a perfect setting for a hidden movement rule.

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Raymond P Campiglio (Order #33181648)

HIDDEN MOVEMENTS:

Type of Field	Type of Building	Density	Malfunction On
Mountains	-	None	Never
Mountains	-	Low	11+
Mountains	-	Average	7+
Mountains	-	High	3+
City	Light	Low	Never
City	Light	Average	Never
City	Light	High	11+
City	Medium	Low	Never
City	Medium	Average	11+
City	Medium	High	8+
City	Heavy	Low	11+
City	Heavy	Average	8+
City	Heavy	High	5+
City	Hardened	Low	8+
City	Hardened	Average	5+
City	Hardened	High	Always

The hidden movement rule requires a Game Master. It will be the G.M.'s responsibility to keep track of each players 'Mech(s) and to determine a few factors about the field set-up.

The G.M. should decide if mountains, hills or other such landmarks contain sufficient mineral substances and/or buildings are numerous enough to interfere with the functioning of the MAG SCAN. The chart below explains the effect of different combat environments on that device. In the chart, the word Mountains stands for mountains, hills and rock hillocks.

When you roll two six-sided dice and the result is a malfunction, the MAG SCAN gives you a reading that is in the least confusing. As result, you simply lose track of your opponents on MAG SCAN for that turn or the rest of the game, if the result shown in the chart is Always. Make this roll at the beginning of the turn, before any movement is resolved.

There are two ways to keep the game fair. First, the G.M. may setup two identical maps, one for each player or player groups. The two maps should be hidden from each other by whatever means available. The G.M. now becomes the eyes, ears and MAG SCAN for each team. All pieces that appear and dissapear in these cat-and-mouse fights, are under the control of the G.M. We recommend more than one G.M. if the combat is complex or the 'Mechs numerous.

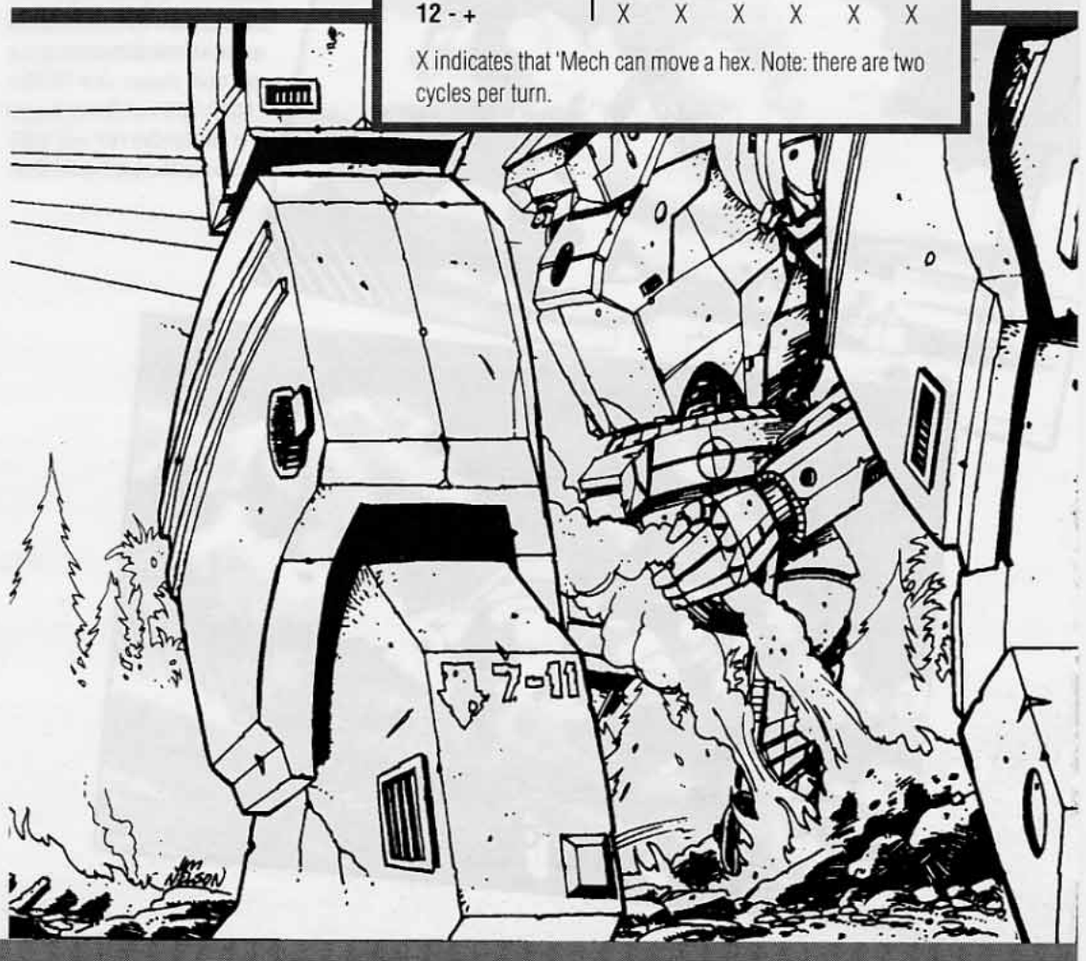
The other method requires that all the pieces be removed from the board. Players 'Mechs are only placed when LOS exists at the end of a phase. Phases are an optional method, borrowed from other combat based games. Using the phasing table below, the G.M. subdivides each BattleTech turn into *n* phases, where *n* is the running speed of the fastest 'Mech. In the chart, an X indicates movement of a hex or a hex side change.

The players plot their move on an approriate small-scale map. Once each of them have their movement done, the G.M. re-enacts the fight, as seen by each 'Mech. Note, this style of fight is perfect for both very light 'Mechs and city fighting 'Mechs, as combat expectency is relatively short after LOS contact.

PHASING TABLE:

RUN MOVEMENT	PHASES					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
2 - 3	X					
4 - 5	X	X				
6 - 7	X	X	X			
8 - 9	X	X	X	X		
10 - 11	X	X	X	X	X	
12 - +	X	X	X	X	X	X

X indicates that 'Mech can move a hex. Note: there are two cycles per turn.



WHY THE "MOBILE SUIT"?

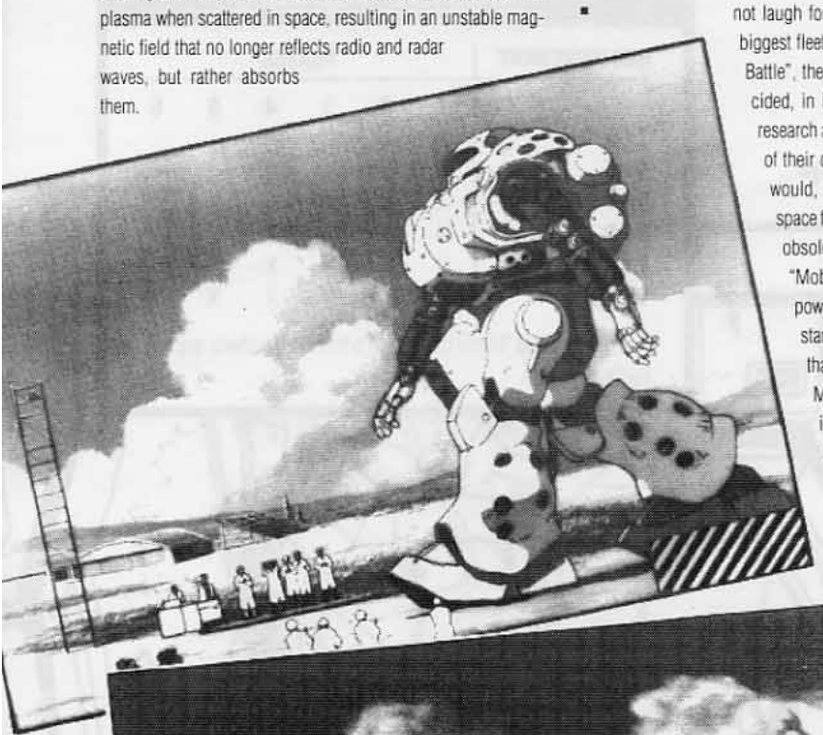
by Martin Ouellette

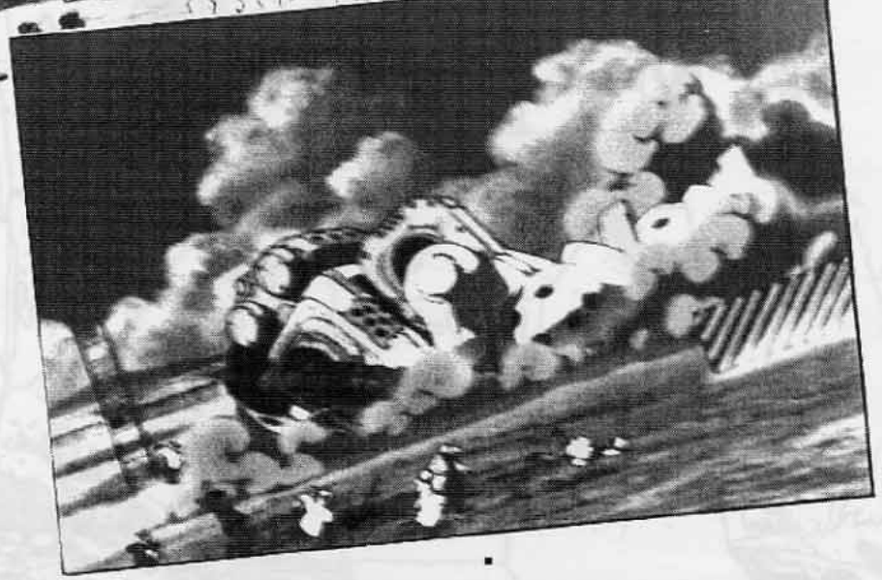
When the Zeon archduchy separated from the Federation in 0054 U.C. (Universal Century), their military specialists decided that Zeon's ships were not up to the task for the kind of combat they would have to wage against the much more numerous Federation ships. What helped them in their search for a more effective weapon system was the discovery of the "Minovski particles". Bearing the name of their discoverer, these particles fuse with plasma when scattered in space, resulting in an unstable magnetic field that no longer reflects radio and radar waves, but rather absorbs them.

Although their short life span represented a major flaw, they fundamentally (and dramatically) altered the rules of combat. They quite simply rendered radar-based weaponry completely ineffective and useless. The Zeon technicians used that discovery to its maximum potential, creating a completely new weapon system, aptly named "Mobile Suit". This was nothing less than a 70 feet tall humanoid soldier which could use the "Minovski particles" as a smoke screen, then simply jump in the middle of the battle to destroy ships totally unaware of its presence (remember there is no radar, combat is on visuals only!).

Because of its relatively small size (compared to ships, of course!), the Zaks (or Zaku) as they came to be known, could destroy a flotilla of Federation ships then turn tail on a dime if the situation demanded it. The "Mobile Suits", more than anything else, made possible Zeon's stand against a much more numerous Federation and helped the opening rounds of the "One Week Battle" (in 0078 U.C.) to go more or less the way Zeon's leaders had predicted it would.

For the Federation, the use of a 70 feet high metallic soldier seemed idiotic at best. They did not laugh for long. When the Zaks tore their biggest fleet to shreds during the "One Week Battle", the Federation's high command decided, in its great wisdom (!), to fund the research and development of a Mobile Suit of their own. Named "RX-78 Gundam", it would, shortly after its insertion in the space forces ranks, make the Zaks nearly obsolete and force Zeon to upgrade their "Mobile Suits" to greater heights of fire power, speed and maneuverability, thus starting a Mobile Suit technology race that hasn't stopped since "Gundam MS" in 1979. Look for new designs in the "Gundam F91" and "0083: Stardust Memories" model kit series.





Dr. Y.T. Minovski

ABREVIATIONS USED IN "GUNDAM"

Gundam: General purpose utility non discontinuity augmentation maneuvering weapon system. Ex: Rx-78 Gundam.

GM: General model. Ex: GM-79

MS: Mobile Suit. Ex: MS-06 Zack

RMS: Refined Mobile Suit. Ex: RMS-106 Hi-Zack

MSZ: Mobile Suit Zeta. Ex: MSZ-006 Z-Gundam

AMS: Assault Mobile Suit. Ex: AMS-119 Geara Doga

MSN: Mobile Suit Newtype. Ex: MSN-04 Sazabi

REGZ: Refined Gundam Zeta. Ex: REGZ-91

RGM: Refined General Model. Ex: RGM-89 Jegan

RGC: Refined Gun Cannon. Ex: RGC-80

AMA: Advanced Mobile Armor. Ex: AMA-01x Jamuru Fin

FA: Full Armor. Ex: FA-78-1

D: Desert. Ex: MS-06 D

E: Exploration. Ex: MS-06 E

B: Bêta. Ex: RMS-117 Galbaldy-B

F: Fighter. Ex: MS-06 F

K: Kannon. Ex: MS-06 K

J: Jäger. Ex: MS-14 Gelgoog-J

R: Regazui (Refined). Sometimes means "Recon"

M: Mariner. Ex: MS-06 M

Z: Zeta. Ex: MSZ-006 Zeta Gundam

S: Space or Superior

VMSAWRS: Variable Mobile Suit And Wave Rider System

AMBAC: Active Mass Balance Auto Control

Raymond P Compiglio (Order #33181648)

GUNDAM DICTIONARY

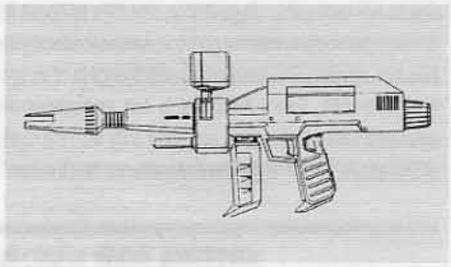
by Martin Ouellette

Here is a small dictionary describing some of the materials you are able to see in the Gundam TV series.

APOGEE MOTORS:
Also known as directionnal trusters. They are small jets dispersed on the mecha's body. Their numbers and size may vary following the type of mecha and its utilization on the field.

ACTIVE MASS BALANCE AUTO CONTROL (A.M.B.A.C.):
This acts as the nervous system of the mecha. It controls equilibrium, speed and various movements necessary for maneuvers.

BEAM RIFLE:

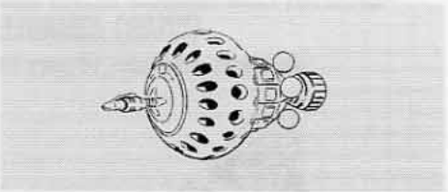


The main weapon of the mecha in "Gundam". This weapon uses a multipolar, high powered electro-magnetic coil that pulls energy from the fusion reactor of the mecha. When in use, the coil oscillates and then accelerates heavy metal particles inside the gun, ejecting them in a tremendous blast of energy, directed at the target chosen by the pilot of the mecha via an optical sensor situated on the rifle itself. A direct hit is always deadly, causing an atomic reactor meltdown of the enemy mecha. Also known as "Beam gun" or "Beam pistol".

BEAM SABER:
Uses the same principle as the "Beam rifle", but the energy is kept in an elongated magnetic field (between 5 and 10 meters long). This is one of the deadliest weapon ever created.

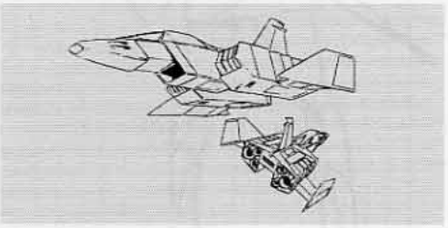
BACK WEAPON SYSTEM (B.W.S.):
Winged back pack used by mobile suits on important combat mission or when heavy fighting is expected. They often incorporate heavy weapon systems such as missiles and "Beam cannons". Exemple: G-defender in Zeta-Gundam.

BITS (DRONE SYSTEM):



Also known as funnels. These are independantly flown drones who use the Newtype energy of the pilot. Can be controlled by Newtype pilots only.

"CORE BLOCK SYSTEM" (C.B.S.):



This is a small fighter plane that folds and forms, as its name indicates, the core of the mecha's body. The mecha using this system are: RX-78, RX-78 GP01, MSZ-010 ZZ Gundam and MSA-0011 S-Gundam.

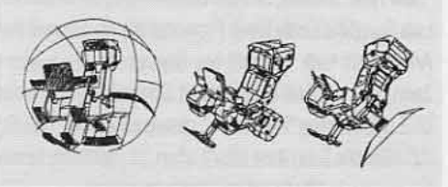
FLYING ARMOR:
Used as an atmospheric re-entry platform for non-transformable mobile suit. Also used for high speed movement between locations. In use by the Federation, Zeon, Axis and Titans mechas.

GUNDARIUM:
The lunar alloy used for the Gundam's armor.

"HEAT SABER":
Used by Zion mobile suits (mainly the MS-09 Rick Dom). They are the ancestors of the beam sabers. They use extreme heat to melt the armor of the enemy suits, hence their name "Heat sabers". Also available in axe form.

INCOMING SYSTEM:
This is used mainly on the "Gundam Sentinels" (MSA-0011 S-Gundam). They are primitive equivalent of the Bits and Funnels you can see in "Char's counterattack: Nu Gundam". See "Bits".

"LINEAR SEAT":

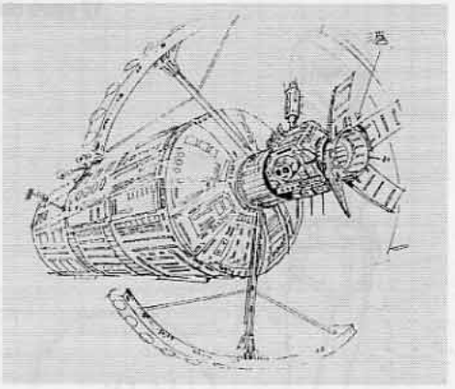


This is the cockpit seat. It includes life support system, foot and hand controls, targeting acquisition systems and signalisation for rescue in case of ejection.

"MEGA-BAZOOKA" OR "HYPER BAZOOKA":
A very, very big bazooka. The caliber may vary between 200 and 900 mm.

MINOVSKY PARTICLES:
Discovered in the year 0065 U.C. by Dr. Y.T. Minovsky, these particles changed the course of history. Infinitesimal, they are metallic particles capable of absorbing both radar and radio waves that can be used as cover by an attacker, or as a smoke screen for a retreat. Their use, along with Zeon's new weapon system, the Mobile Suit, gave the Archduchy one of it's greatest victories of the "One Year War". The particles' biggest drawback are their short lifespan, which forces their users to renew them constantly. They are used by Zeon and the Federation as a cover for military operations, in space and in the Sides.

"SIDES" (OR SPACE COLONIES):



These are the space colonies we'll probably see, if we live long enough. They are huge cylinders, about 35 to 60 km long, containing about 25 million people each. Gravity is created by rotation along their long axis. Usually, they have the same number of "ground panels" alternating with glass panels (if there's three ground panels, there will be three glass panels) which allows the sunlight to get into the colony. There is always a space port at one extremity and a group of thrusters at the other. Solar panels are used for electrical needs.

"PSYCHOMMU" SYSTEM:
Weapon using the New Type energy of the mecha's pilot. Both firing and aiming.

SKIRT:
Armor parts used to protect the leg and tigh joints. They do look like skirts!

VERNIER ROCKETS:
Same as "Apogee motors" but smaller and more primitive. They use rocket fuel.

VULCAN GUN:
Also known as "Gatling gun". Often placed on the head of the mecha. Some are placed on forearm platforms for a more advantageous field of fire.

GUNDAM CHARACTERS

by Martin Ouellette

These are simplified biographies of "Gundam MS" characters. More can be learned by reading the three novels available from Del Rey.

Principal characters

AMURO REY:

Cadet first class, later ensign, then lieutenant (JG). 17 years old.

An innocent and kind youth, Amuro finds himself thrown into a war more savage than anything the human race has ever known. Although trained to use a "Mobile Suit", he has at first doubts about his ability to pilot one of the giant machines. Then one day all hell breaks loose in side 7 (where he's training) when two Zeon "Mobile Suit" (Zakus) enter the colony stealthily to destroy the "Mobile Suit" the Federation is working on. That day, Amuro forgets his doubts and fears, discovering to his amazement that his abilities are just fine. In fact, they are truly incredible! The mecha responds with extraordinary speed and smoothness, allowing Amuro to destroy the two Zaks easily. After this first battle, Amuro is put in full charge of the Gundam (RX-78). During the one year war, Amuro Rey will time and time again prove his worth and courage, especially when fighting his greatest enemy, Char Aznable, Zeon's best Mobile Suit pilot. Amuro is without a doubt one of the most powerful New Types in Gundam and certainly, one of the most heroic anti-heros of Japanimation.

CASPAR LEM DAIKUN ALIAS SHA (CHAR) AZNABLE:

Lieutenant commander. 18 years old.

Sha is a man of many traits and talents. A supremely confident pilot, he's a brilliant tactician, efficient, manipulative, and cold, coldness being a front for the tenderness and love he is capable of showing to the ones worthy of his trust. His confidence and skills as a "Mobile Suit" pilot gave him his grade of Lt. commander in the Zeon forces. Although he seems devoted to Zeon's ruling family, the Zavis, he infiltrated Zeon with only one desire: to destroy the family he knows to be the murderers of his father, Zeon Zum Daikun, the founder of the Zeon republic (becoming an archduchy under the Zavis) and creator of the "New Type" concept. Sha finds in Amuro Rey the enemy he was fighting in his worst nightmares. Although he's a powerful "New Type" himself, Sha can do nothing when Amuro kills Lala Sun (Sha's only love). From that day on, Sha will hunt Amuro with hate. Sha will one day become the leader of Zeon, join the Anti Earth United Government movement (A.E.U.G.) during "Z Gundam", disappear during "Gundam ZZ" (Double Zeta) then return when 33 years old, to meet his destiny in "Nu Gundam: Char's counterattack" (1988). He will be missed by all "Gundam" fans and will probably always be seen, by many, as "the" character in the many Gundam series.

LALA SUN:

Has a position in the Flanagan agency. 18 years old.

Lala is an extremely powerful New Type and the only real love Sha Aznable will ever know. She's responsible for many of the plot twists in Gundam, including the clash of wills between Amuro Rey and Sha Aznable, a clash that ends in "Char's counterattacks: Nu Gundam", many years later. Enroled by Zeon for her New Type abilities, Lala, after many tests, is chosen to be the pilot of Zeon' newest weapon system, the "Elmeth" mobile armor. Her psychic contact with Amuro Rey during a battle persuades her that she must do everything in her power to prevent Amuro and Sha to kill each other. Regrettably, she fails to do so for during a particularly intense combat, Amuro inadvertently kills her, rending Sha nearly mad with thoughts of vengeance and hate. Lala's influence is felt throughout the animated series and books, stopping only with the death of Sha and Amuro in "Char's counterattacks: Nu Gundam".

ARTESIA SOM DAIKUN ALIAS SAILA MAS:

Petty officer second class. 20 years old.

Although serving in the Federation, Saila is the daughter of Zeon Zum Daikun, the founder of Zeon, and the sister of Sha Aznable, Zeon's best pilot. Being a New Type, she senses that Sha's obsession with avenging their father's death will be his undoing. Extremely attracted to Amuro Rey, Saila will become his confident and later his lover. A beautiful young woman with blond hair and blue eyes, Saila is certainly one of the most attractive characters in "Gundam MS".

Raymond P Campiglio (Order #33181648)

Secondary characters

BRITE NOA:

Ensign (later captain), early twenties.

The stuffed shirt of the Pegasus' crew, Brite by a twist of fate becomes the ships captain. He soon forgets his aloof ways and gains the trust of his crew. Using all the resources he can, Brite Noa finds the way to win battles against overwhelming odds. Brite is present in all the Gundam's animated TV series.

MIRAI YASHIMA:

The Pegasus' pilot. 18 years old.

Mirai is a young woman with exceptional insights, a quality helped by her New Type abilities. She will, on multiple occasions, save the Pegasus from being destroyed during combat. Mirai, with time, will become Brite Noa's sweetheart then his wife. She is seen a number of times during the animated series following "Gundam MS", making her last appearance in "Nu Gundam: Char's counterattack".

GREN ZAVI:

Supreme Commander of the Zeon forces.

Gren Zavi is the master of the Zeon archduchy, his father Degin Zavi being nothing more than a puppet. He hates his father who one day told him that he wasn't a New Type but only a revised version of Adolf Hitler. He is, with his sister Krishia, the creator of the Mobile Suit concept. He will meet an end in accordance with his way of life. After trying to kill Krishia and failing, she will kill him herself. No one cried at his funeral.

KAI SHIDEN:

Cadet first class (later ensign) and Gun Cannon pilot. 18 years old.

Kai Shiden is a strange young man, in both looks and way of thinking, who enjoys chasing skirts and making lewd jokes (often about Amuro Rey's relationship with Saila Mas). He's a very good Gun Cannon pilot, being quite satisfied in playing second fiddle to Amuro Rey (except when Saila is concerned!) Kai is Amuro's good friend and stands by him all the way during "Gundam MS" and even makes an apparition in "Z-Gundam". He discovers his New Type powers with astonishment and uses them with great skills.

HAYATO KOBAYASHI:

Cadet first class (later ensign) and Gun Cannon pilot. 18 tears old.

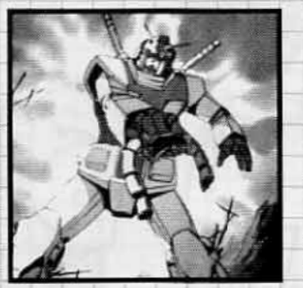
Hayato is quite sure of himself as a pilot but cannot accept the fact that Amuro Rey is the one chosen by fate to pilot the "RX-78 Gundam". His jealousy and desire to prove to everyone around him that he's as good as Amuro sometimes drive him to do things that no sane person would do, like going out alone, in his mecha, without cover. Hayato exults when he discovers his New Type abilities. He is seen only in "Gundam MS" and makes no further appearances in any of the other series.

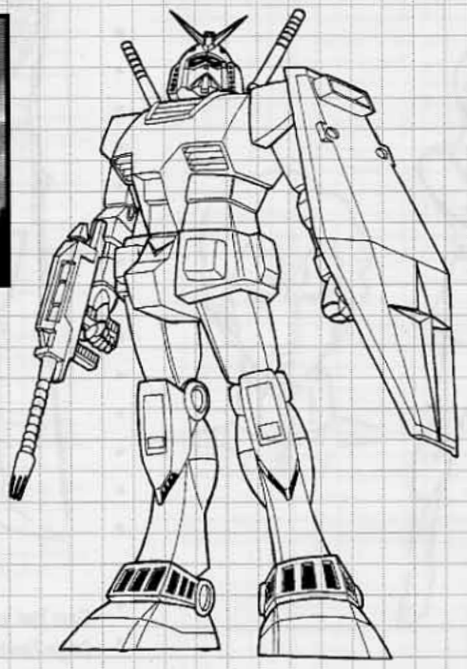
GENERAL REVIL:

General, in his late sixties, early seventies.

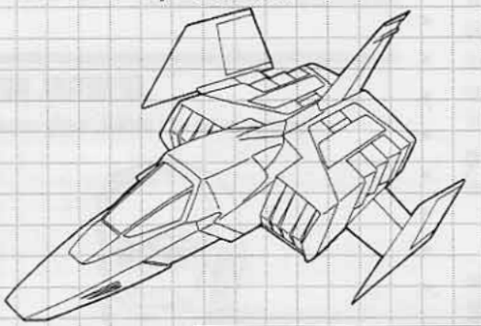
General Revil is a genius in the field of space combat tactics. First of his class from kindergarten to officer's academy, where he received full honor for his performances, Revil is without a doubt the best soldier and military mind the Federation forces have to offer. Leader of the Federation forces during the "Battle of Ruum" ("One Week Battle"), he was captured when his flagship was destroyed. He escaped from Zeon just in time to address the people of Earth in a speech that became famous as the "Zeon is exhausted" speech, an oration that convinced the populations of Earth not to give in to the threats of Zeon's leaders who where, at that time, in negotiations with the Federation about the capitulation of Earth. General Revil has the honor of discovering the New Type potential present in the Pegasus' crew, making them, their ship and Mobile Suits, the nucleus of the Federation Mobile Suit forces. He meets his death during the last battle of the "One Year War", in 0080 U.C. (Universal Century).

RX-78 GUNDAM/FF-X7 CORE FIGHTER



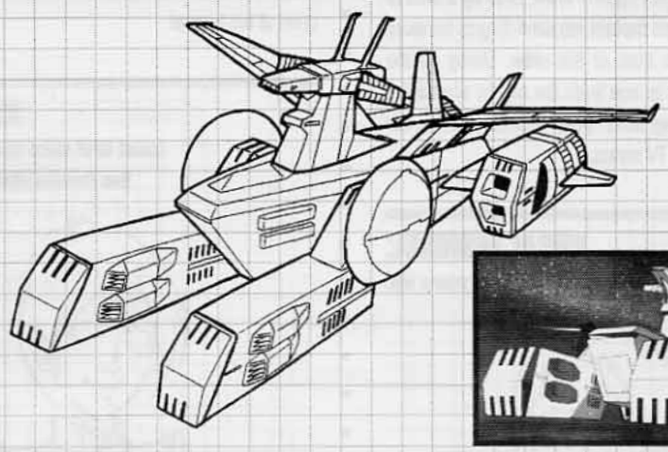


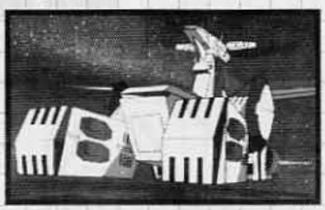
RX-78 Gundam Mobile Suit: Although humanoid in shape, this Suit is extremely different from its opponent, the MS-06 Zaku. The most visible difference being the color. The Zakus (Zaks) are green (Char Aznable's is red) while the Gundam is predominantly white with a blue and red torso and some yellow on the chest, head and hips. In close-up, differences in shape, technology and armament are visible, even to the untrained eyes. The Gundam is slimmer and taller than the Zaks, the head has two sensor cameras (the Zaks only one), which are usually yellow or green. This gives the Suit's face that strangely human look. On the technological side, the Gundam's torso contains a core fighter system (see Dictionary entry), there are more thrusters, maneuverability is increased comparatively to the Zaks and the sensor and communication gears are more advanced. As far as the armament is concerned the RX-78 definitely has the upper hand with its beam gun, 2 beam sabers, two 60 mm vulcan guns (head), hyper-bazooka and shield (see Dict. entry). The Gundams are mostly prototypes, which means that there's often only one in each animated series (Zeta Gundam is an exception). "Gundam Sentinel" actually has 6 types of Gundam but there's no animation on this one. Used by the Federation.



FF-X7 Core Fighter: Especially conceived for the Federation's Mobile Suits. As its name states, it is a fighter created to be the "core" of the Suits. The FF-X7 has a flat and square shape with re-configurable wing surfaces and a cockpit for one pilot (no passengers in this one!). But it isn't only a plane. It's also foldable, so that once re-configured it forms a rectangular structure, which is placed vertically between the waist and the torso of the Mobile Suit (the only way to do this is to separate the halves of the mecha) thus making the connection or "interlink" possible. Being a compromise between a fighter, an ejection capsule and an "interlink" system, the core fighter isn't very good in his fighter configuration mainly because of its lack of maneuverability and sufficient wing surfaces, making its atmospheric performances less than acceptable. Better examples will be seen in Gundam ZZ, "0083" and Gundam Sentinel. Used by the Federation forces.

"WHITE BASE" CLASS SPACE SHIP (PEGASUS)

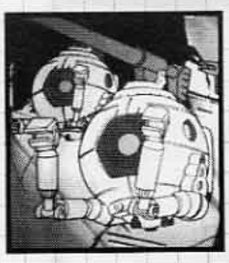


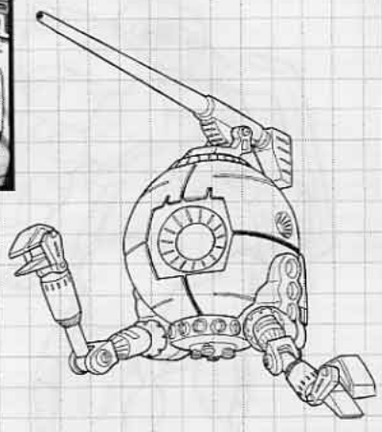


"White Base" class space ship (Pegasus): The Federation Mobile Suit force flagship, the Pegasus is a strangely designed ship. Its name derives from its shape which really looks like a squatting winged horse, with its wings deployed. The layout is quite useful for Mobile Suit's use. First, the two runways equipped with catapults are placed on the front legs, a giant hatch being located on each side of the torso (which serves as a Mobile Suit bay). The bridge forms the head of the "horse", allowing a 100% view of the runways. The stabilizers or "wings" are the solar energy panels of the ship with many apogee motors dispersed all over their edges. As in standard ships, the engines are placed in the back of the ship with an airlock between the back legs. As for armament, the White Base class is one of the most heavily armed ship of the Federation. Its weapons consist of four heavy beam cannons, small missile launchers placed all over the ship and eight heavy missile launchers on the front legs of the "horse". This ship is seen throughout the Gundam animation series including the latest "0083: Stardust Memories". The White Base class is used by the Federation and the A.E.U.G. (in Z-Gundam). The "White Base" class is soon renamed "Aghama" class.

Raymond P Campiglia (Order #23181649)

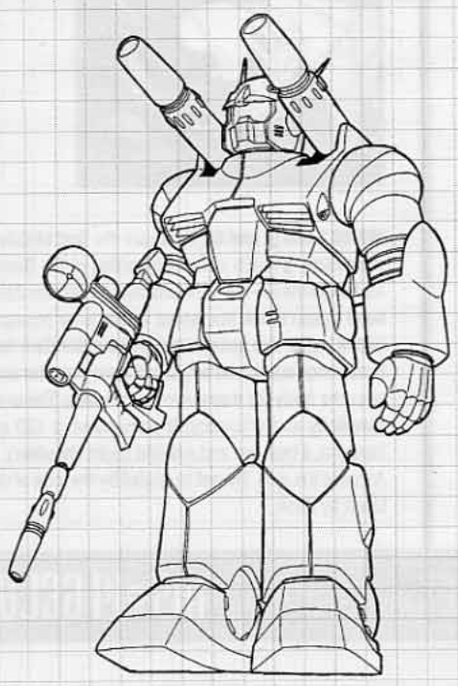
VX-76 BOWLS:





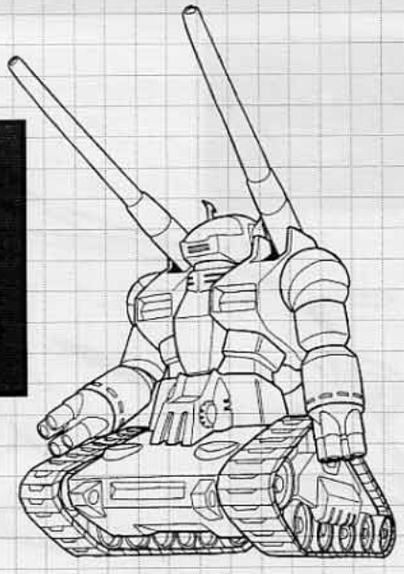
VX-76 Bowls: These are early prototypes nicknamed "Bowls" because of their round shape. They lacked legs but had vernier jets in a 360° configuration for attitude control and a pair of rudimentary manipulator arms. The arms were incapable of holding anything as sophisticated as a beam rifle, so a hyper-bazooka was built on the top.

RX-77 GUN CANNON:



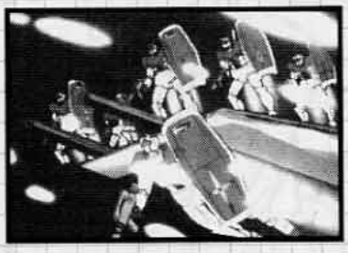
RX-77 Gun Cannon: The most heavily armed and armored Suit in "Gundam MS". It sports two shoulder beam cannons, a beam gun (see Dict. entry) and a shield. The blazing red color is used to distinguish it from the Zaks (at a certain distance their shapes are similar) and the head is a mix between the Gundam's and the GM's. The gun cannon is mostly used for heavy cover fire or long range attacks, its low maneuverability being less than ideal for close quarter combat. The absence of a beam saber (see Dict. entry) doesn't help any. That doesn't mean that the Suit isn't up to its task, on the contrary. Used by the Federation.

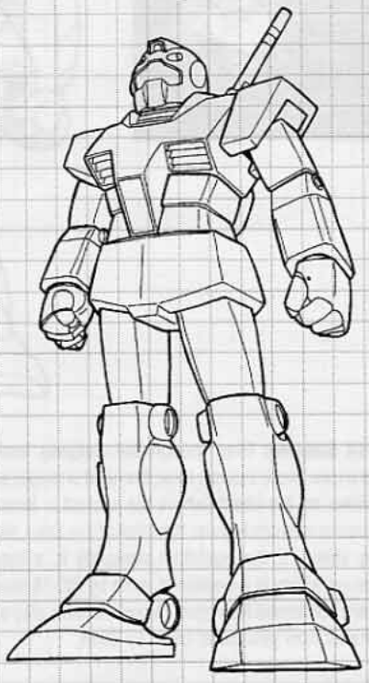
RX-75 GUNTANK:



RX-75 Guntank: The first Suit designed by the Federation forces, the Guntank is really an unusual machine. It is quite simply a Mobile Suit torso mounted on a tank chassis. The Suit's design isn't very impressive but the armament is! It consists of two shoulder mounted beam cannons (long barreled versions of the guncannon) and two four-barreled beam guns replacing the arms. Maneuverability isn't on a par with the other Mobile Suits. Furthermore, without arms or legs, hand to hand combat is strictly forbidden. The only thing which saves the RX-75 from annihilation in combat is its awesome firepower and massive armor. Used by the Federation forces.

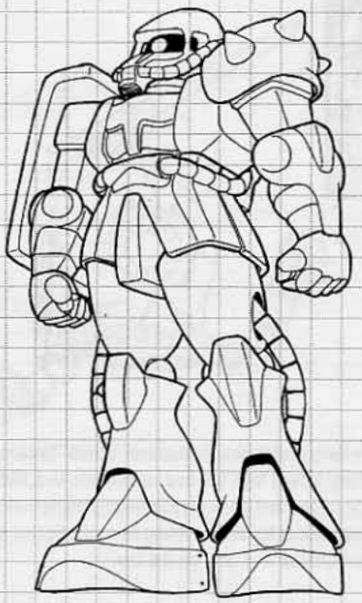
GM-79 GM GENERAL MODEL





GM-79 GM General Model Mobile Suit: This is the Gundam's little brother. It retains the Gundam's extremely human shape and proportions but on a smaller scale. Its armament isn't as fearsome as the Gundam's and the head looks like a motorcycle helmet with a large viewpane protecting a single sensor eye (more advanced than the Zak's). The colors are white and red, although more colorful examples are known (RGM-89 Jegan and MSA-003 Nemo). As its name suggests, this is a Suit manufactured in large quantities and is often piloted by newcomers in the ranks. It is felt by yours truly that the design of this Suit does not protect the pilot adequately and that the armament don't live up to their task. Used by the Federation.

MS-06 ZAKU (F AND S):

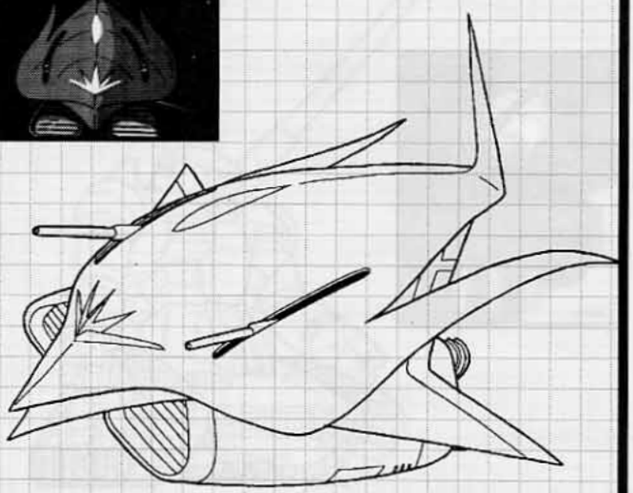


MS-06 ZAKU (F and S): These are the first Mobile Suits ever made. It goes without saying that the design is much simpler than that of the Gundam Suit used by the Federation. Although it looks like the Rx-78 to the untrained eyes, the Zakus forms are rounder and less technical. The head doesn't look humanoid whatsoever (compared to the Gundam), having a round shape with a mono-eye sensor camera (the Gundam has two of them) and two cables on each side. Propulsion is assured by a small fusion reactor engine linked to small apogee motors dispersed over the body for maneuvering in space. The armament is technically interesting for both its simplicity and efficiency. It consists of: a 120 mm automatic cannon (hand held), a hyper-bazooka, a heat axe and a shield (right shoulder). The color of the mecha is a sickly green (Sha Aznable's is red). Do not be fooled by the look of this Suit. This is an enemy to be reckoned with. Used by Zeon.

MS-14 GELGOOG:

MS-14 Gelgoog: Even though the Gelgoog looks like the MS-06 Zaku, there are some differences. From a closer look, the head is longer and flater with a kind of fin on top. The armor is thicker on the chest (where the cockpit is located), waist, shoulders and lower legs. The armament is much heavier than that of the Zaku, being made of a beam rifle, a beam saber and a big shield. If the operation demands it, a hyper-bazooka can be used. The Gelgoog's maneuverability is exceptional, even by RX-78 standards. The MS-14 is mostly used by aces that are confirmed Newtypes. A good advice: stay away from the Gelgoogs! They're bad news, no matter how you cut it! Used by Zeon.

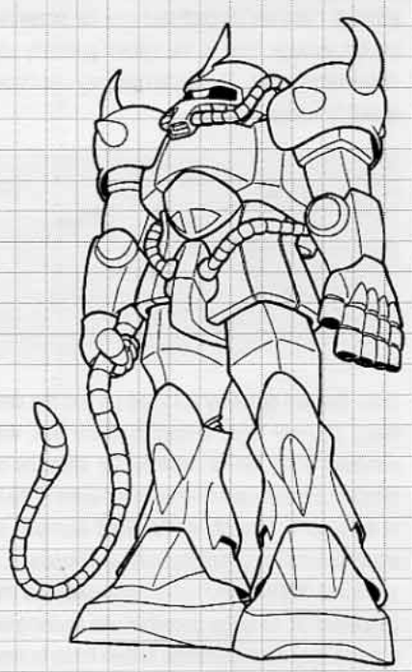
MAN-08 ELMETH:



MAN-08 ELMETH: This is not a Mobile Suit. In fact, it looks more like a flattened plane with no wings and no tail. The cockpit is located in an advanced position from the fuselage which has, if seen from the side, the shape of a bird's head. The armament consists of two particle beam cannons and ten "Bits" (see Bits in Gundam Dictionary). If the maneuverability is excellent, speed is truly astonishing (in space only), making the Elmeth one of the fastest and most efficient weapon systems available to Zeon. It must be said that only Newtypes can pilot the Elmeth and that ordinary pilots are easy preys for the Bits drones it is carrying. Used exclusively by Zeon forces.

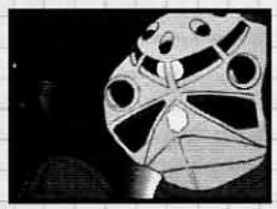
Raymond P Campiglia (Order #22191649)

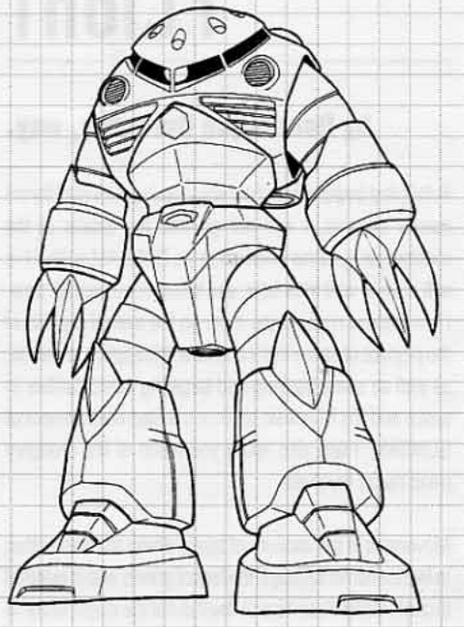
MS-07 GOUF (OR GUFFU):



MS-07 Gouf (or Guffu): This mecha was created especially for commanding officers. The aspect and basic frame are directly taken from the MS-06 Zaku, to the point that apart from the color (the MS-07 is blue, the MS-06 is green) the two can easily be mistaken for one another. The Guffu's armament consists of an energy whip (which retracts in the forearm when not in use), four 120 mm cannons (built into the left hand fingers) and a shield. Since this Suit was conceived for hand to hand fighting, it isn't a good idea to engage it in close combat. Used by Zeon.

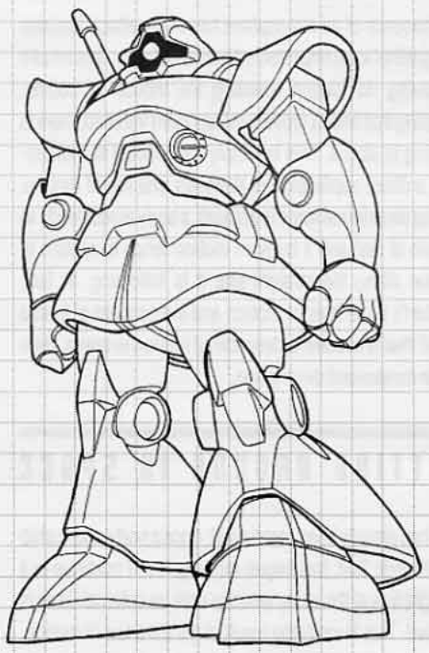
MSM-07 ZUGGOCKU:





MSM-07 Zuggocku: One of the strangest Suit in Gundam MS, this is an amphibious Mobile Suit used for underwater and wet conditions (marshes and such) assault. The body is squat and short, without head. The unique mono-sensor eye camera is located under a dome between the shoulders. The sensor camera can move 360° horizontally. Arms are present, but the hands are replaced by blade-like pincer hands and six torpedoes are placed between the shoulders (on top of the "head"). A beam cannon is placed inside each forearm. A thruster back pack can be installed for special assignments. The Zuggocku is used mostly for commando-style operations, along with its usual partner, the MSM-03 GOG (MSM-03/C HY-GOG in Gundam 0080). Zeon is the sole user of this mecha.

MS-09 RICK DOM:



MS-09 Rick Dom: Zeon's heaviest Suit in "Gundam MS". The colors are purple and black with some red on the head. The shoulders, hip and back skirts are flared for better protection from glancing hits, as are the lower legs. The head is very distinctive, the mono-eye sensor camera being placed in the middle of a viewpane in the shape of a cross which gives the Suit a 180° field of vision horizontally and vertically. This Suit is designed for very close quarters combat and the armament shows it: hyper-bazooka (360 mm rockets), heat saber and. The armor is heavy and maneuverability is comparable to the Gundam's. Truly an adversary to fear and respect. Used by Zeon.

SPACE FLIGHT

by Dominique Durocher, eng.

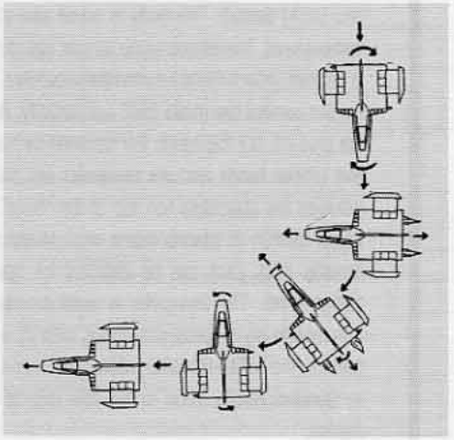
In this first installment of my engineering view of different mecha systems, I will not go into the details of the mechanical systems involved in the GUNDAM suits. This will have to wait for a later, and better documented, time. I will instead concentrate more on the overall aspects of the physics of space flight and how this applies to mecha, as well as some tracking and targeting particularities in space and the Minovski particle infested environment of GUNDAM. I will also spare you much of the drudgery (read math) involved.

Movement in the vacuum of space differs from any other in two fundamental ways: the lack of gravity and of external friction. Weightlessness in itself is not the major factor in the difficulties of space travel, other than some physiological aspects. It is only somewhat confusing in that the usual up-and-down reference we use to orient ourselves no longer exists. Training and the use of some artificial reference, probably the orientation of the carrier ship at the time of launch, will eliminate these effects. Prolonged living in space may also give an increased awareness of one's spatial orientation; not that of the New Types, of course, but more in line with that of gymnasts.

The absence of an atmosphere has many effects besides being lethal to an unprotected human. Mainly, this results in having no friction resisting the motion of bodies, meaning that once a movement has been initiated, there is nothing to stop it. This is simply the concept of momentum, a direct application of Newton's first law of motion: unless an external force is applied, a body at rest tends to remain at rest and a body in motion tends to remain in motion along the straight line it is following. In fact, Newton's three laws of motion and the concept of inertia are all that is needed to describe all motion in space. Here is the condensed description.

GETTING AROUND IN SPACE

As it has already been mentioned, once a body, like a ship or a Mobile Suit, has begun moving, it will continue in a straight line at the same velocity until an external force is applied. This force is the result of the third law of motion, the action - reaction principle, and can be either the impact of another body, the launching of a projectile (recoil) or the high-speed ejection of gases from an exhaust port. Of course, the latter is the most common. Simply moving the arms and legs, the "wing flapping" syndrome, will result in nothing more that a slight rotation of the MS since the forces required are internal to the system, but I will discuss this later. All this means that, once the Suit starts moving, it requires the same force applied in the opposite direction to stop. According to the second law of motion, the intensity of the force will determine how quickly it will be immobilized. As for turning, that comes down to stopping your movement in one direction and starting it in the other. This will usually be done under computer control, gradually changing the thrust line to be perpendicular to the direction of travel and obtaining a smoothly curving arc.

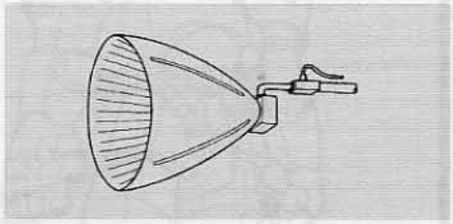


The required thrust is generated by circulating a pressurized liquid (Helium-3 where GUNDAM mecha and ships are concerned) in or near the reactor core, allowing it to absorb heat. This super-heated liquid, as it remains by maintaining high pressures in the system, is then injected into an exhaust cone, where it vaporizes and is accelerated to high speeds creating an enormous propulsive force. Functioning in this way eliminates the need for combustion to increase the gas's pressure, therefore not requiring separate fuel and oxidizer and increasing the quantity of reaction mass (as noncombustible fuel is called) and increasing the autonomous endurance of the Suit, although it will still remain limited.

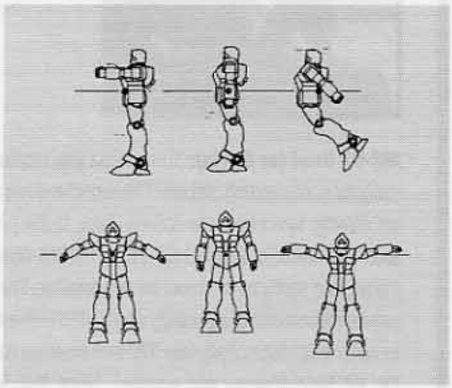
MANEUVERING A SUIT

It is not all to simply be able to change position, but also to orient oneself in space. No amount of speed can help if you cannot rotate to face an opponent coming at you from your side. This involves moving the Mobile Suit around its center of mass (or Cm), the point at which the mass of a body is considered to be concentrated for the purposes of dynamic analysis.

Applying thrust has two effects. First, there is a linear motion generated in the direction opposite of that of the exhaust, which is used mostly to propel the Suit as seen above. Second, if the thrust line does not pass by the Cm, a rotation is induced around this point. This is how the Mobile Suit will twist and turn around on itself, while maintaining the same direction of travel. The source of thrust for these maneuvers are called Vernier jets. They generally consist of a container sending short bursts of a liquid, generally nitrogen (largely available at low cost) or perhaps an inert gas (like helium-3), which is quickly vaporized and accelerated in a parabolic exhaust port, as with the main thrusters. This port can be as little as an inch in diameter, making them all but invisible from a distance. Vernier jets are dispersed all over the surface of a Suit, although many are concentrated near the extremities for greater leverage. This is the system presently used to maneuver satellites. The ejected gas may also have been heated to increase thrust.



Since they are generally not lined up with the center of mass, they will cause a rotation of the Suit, with the computer firing two or more to not affect its overall direction. Rotation speed is controlled either by the length of the burst or through inertia. Good examples of this would be airborne gymnasts and figure skaters or, better yet, divers. With nothing but an initial rotational impulse (since they are no longer in contact with anything to push against), they use the position of their limbs to vary their rotational speed, extending them to slow or tucking in to accelerate. Again, since there is no external friction, an equal strength opposite use of the jets stops the rotation.



You can also move around slightly only by moving the Suit's limbs. This movement requires purely internal forces, which do not affect the spatial position of the center of mass, only where it is within the suit. In this way, raising the arms, which will bring the Cm higher, will in fact lower the Suit because the absolute motion of the Cm is null. This can allow some fancy dodging, moving the arms and legs around to shift the body's position away from an impending impact. High jumpers use this effect to gain a slight edge by passing their center of mass under the bar while the body is over it.

Raymond P Compiglio (Order #23181648)

HOW AND WHAT YOU SEE

There are five major categories of sensing devices presently in existence : acoustic, radio/radar, infra-red/thermal, electro-optical and direct visual observation (colloquially called the Mark I eyeball within camouflage circles, Mark II for the trained eye). The first group, acoustic sensors, can immediately be eliminated in the vacuum of space, since sound has no medium to carry it. All the others are basically unaffected by space itself, although some particular effects do present themselves.

The problems involved in tracking and targeting are, in the GUNDAM universe,in large part due to the presence of large quantities of Minovski particles. Minovski particles are described as infinitesimal charged, and probably conductive, particles that fuse with plasma and create an unstable ion state that absorbs radio waves, therefore making radio communications and radar tracking useless. Actually, this means that the particles absorbs electromagnetic radiation (which include radio waves, light, infra-red, X-rays, etc...) in the longer wavelength bands (in the order of the meter to 0.01 meters) corresponding to radio and radar without affecting the region of visible light, since lasers are mentioned as being the only reliable long-range sensor. This absorption comes from the reaction of the charged particles to the electric and magnetic components of the radio waves.

When a conductor is subjected to a varying magnetic field, current is generated within it, which is how electrical generators work. In this case, the current is contained within a particle without having a circuit to flow through, and is called a Foucault current. This current, in turn causes a magnetic field opposing the change that created it, and jams that original signal. The fact that the particle is charged only means that it is accelerated by the electrical field of the radio wave, therefore increasing the rate of change of the magnetic field and increasing the Foucault currents.

This leaves visual, electro-optical and infra-red. The latter would seem as an ideal choice, since space is extremely cold and the technology is widely used today. The background heat radiation is considered to be that of 3°K (-270°C or -454°F). With the amount of heat generated by the fusion reactors and weapons of Mobile Suits, they would stand out, quite literally, like a fire at night. But it would seem that IR sensing is also affected by Minovski particles. Nothing less that the flares of a missile's rocket thruster is mentioned as being detected on infrared scanners. This would happen if the Minovski particles re-emitted the absorbed radiation in the form of heat. This is to be expected since they would have some electrical resistivity (assuming that the extreme temperature does not make them superconductive). The energy dissipated by the resistance would be radiated as heat, possibly enough to create a "hot" background in areas other than in line with the sun or affected by the presence of a large warm body (planet or side).

Visual and electro-optical are affected in very similar manners. Visual sighting is limited by the resolution of the eye. It will allow you to determine the direction in which an object is but, with the lack of reference in the vastness of space and the lack of an atmosphere to blur distant objects, one loses the sense of scale. This makes determining ranges somewhat difficult. The same is true of electro-optical sighting, essentially looking through television cameras. One can hardly determine at what distance an object is or its size. Lasers, that I include in the electro-optical sensors, functions like a radar, sending a beam of visible or near-visible light that is reflected back toward its source from a target. By scanning in a tight pattern around a detected object, it is possible to get an idea of its shape as well as its range, by calculating the time for the echo to return, and speed, by the Doppler shift of the laser light's frequency.

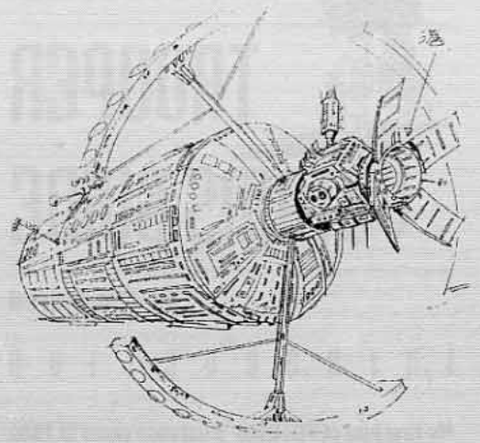
KEEPING COOL

Another aspect that has been brought to my attention is heat evacuation. There are three modes of heat transfer: conduction, convection and radiation. The first two are the most efficient, but they require a medium, like air or preferably water, into which the heat will flow. This medium is not present in space, leaving only radiation. This heat transfer mode actually involves the exchange of energy between different bodies through a combination of emission, absorption and reflection. In space, a body needs to emit more heat energy than it receives to have a total evacuation, obviously.

As it has already been mentioned, space is very cold, a good thing in this case. But there is still plenty of heat. The background radiation may be only 3°K, but there is the sun, planetary bodies, ships and Suits emitting heat all around. Some of it stays and tries to be absorbed by any nearby body. Heat sinks are designed with a great number of small fins to increase their surface. The greater the surface, the greater the heat exchange. They are usually made of metals, which are highly heat conductive. There is a big problem: what usually evacuates heat well, absorbs it equally well; cancelling out any advantage. There is considerable research underway to improve heat sinks for satellites and the space station. It concentrates on fin configurations, coating and materials to reduce heat absorption while maintaining or increasing evacuation.

That's it for this time. In the next issue, I will describe the characteristics of hydraulic and electrical actuators used in mecha, and how these systems make mecha almost feasible. Future issues will cover materials and control systems technologies.

LAGRANGE POINTS



During the late 1770's, the French physicist Joseph Louis Lagrange, while studying three-body systems, mathematically discovered something quite interesting. The problem itself was straight forward: calculating the gravitational influences of two masses orbiting each other, like the Earth and Moon, on a third body in their vicinity. He found that at certain points, the gravitational forces of the two bodies are equal (but they do not necessarily cancel each other out). An object at any of these points actually orbits both larger masses at the same period, going around the first in the same time as it takes to go around the second.

The first three Lagrange points are situated on the axis linking the two main bodies. The first, L1, is between the two bodies. It is the only point where the gravity of both bodies cancel each other. The second is beyond the smaller one and the third behind the larger body. These points are relatively unstable. Any perturbation of the satellite along the axis would cause it to gradually fall towards one of the bodies.

The other two Lagrange points, L4 and L5, are on the orbit of the smaller body, at 60 degrees on either side. These are extremely stable points, as demonstrated by clusters of asteroids found at these points on the orbits of both Jupiter and the Earth. In fact, the latter, called the Trojan asteroids, will probably be the first to be exploited since they require barely more energy to reach than the moon, or about 1% of that needed to reach Mars. This fact is part of the timeline of Cybersuit Arkadyne.

There is one other factor that must also be considered. Since the solar system contains more than two planetary bodies, there are many other influences on an object's orbit. The sun's gravity is particularly bothersome. This causes the actual Lagrange points to fluctuate a bit, actually orbiting their theoretical position. The other planets also add perturbations that can send satellites flying away from unstable points if they are not compensated for.

In many SF universes, the Lagrange points are considered ideal positions to build stations or colonies. That is also true of Gundam. Their positions being set in respect to the Earth and Moon, aiming communications antennae and navigation are quite simple. The travel times between the various points are short and require little energy by using the gravitational wells of both bodies.

ARMORED TROOPER VOTOMS GUIDE

By Tim Eldred

INTRODUCTION

My first hint of VOTOMS' existence came in 1984 while scanning the racks of a Michigan hobby shop. There, among the new, flamboyant MACROSS models, was a nonchalant Scopedog. Now, I won't get all nebulous about it, but something clicked in my mind when I saw it. Its design and the program it must have originated from seemed so...right that I couldn't resist the purchase, though convinced I would never quite learn why.

Then a friend, Steve Harrison, mentioned he had the first five TV episodes. Here, after YAMATO, which I believed was the greatest anime of all, was a series that embodied everything I liked about science-fiction: a tough, gritty atmosphere, colorful characters, driving music, and layer upon layer of logistic detail. Of course, the language barrier rendered much of the story inaccessible, but in the face of all else, this mattered little.

I took the initiative to track down the source of these episodes, a man named David Ledermann, and was dumbfounded when he claimed not to care for them and quite simply gave me his entire set of the first thirteen!

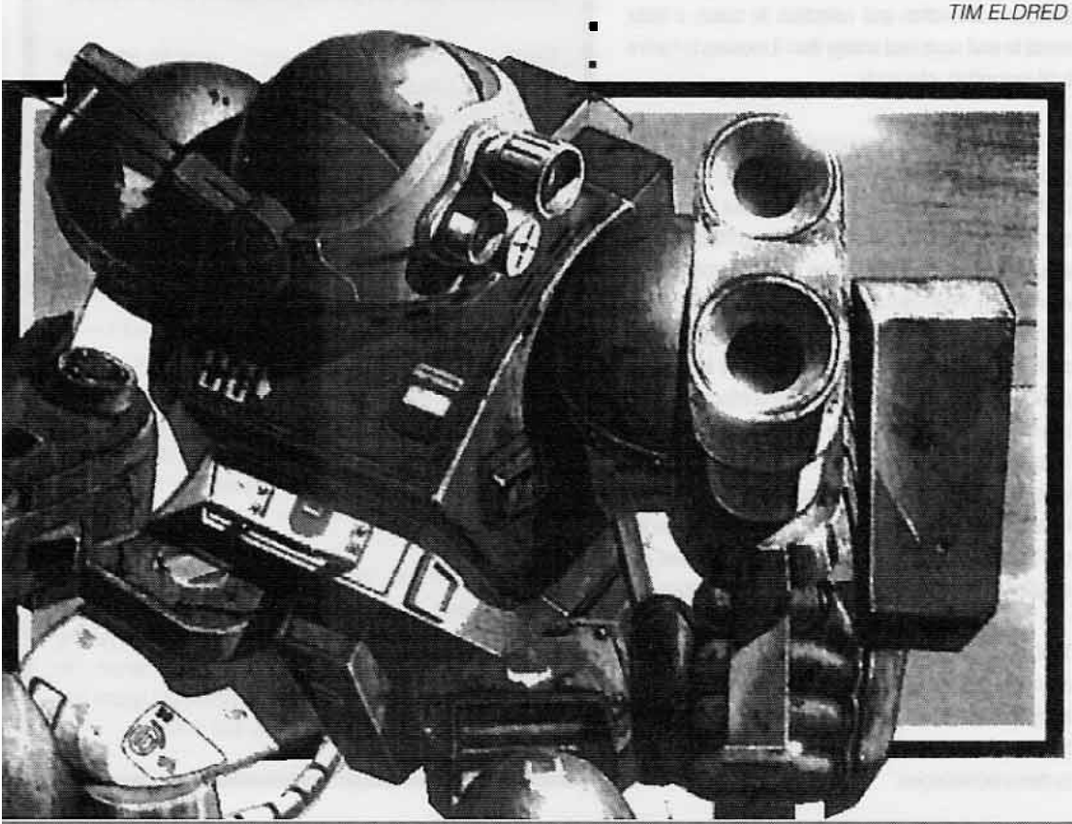
Thus was the die cast. Over the next few years I assembled a complete collection, bought books and videos, and basically enjoyed an extended VOTOMS orgy. But what next?

In 1986 I learned of the Cartoon/Fantasy Organization and that its Chairman, Randall Stukey, wanted to start an anime APA. I joined, raved up and down in its pages about how great VOTOMS was, and finally wrote a character guide to prove it. I now had the impetus to produce an episode guide as well.

Three years and three translators later, the VIEWER'S GUIDE is finished. I've found that seldom does an anime program equal what you interpret it to be, but as VOTOMS unfolded before me, my imagination was surpassed.

Hopefully, this guide will grant you the same pleasure. It is dedicated to Steve, Dave, Randall, and everyone else who played a part in its genesis.

TIM ELDRED



It was early 1983, the boom year of post-GUNDAM Japanese Robot Animation. Writer/Director Ryosuke Takahashi had introduced DOUGRAM to audiences eager for more of the exciting new potentials GUNDAM had inspired by shifting perspective away form the robot superteam shows of the Seventies. Now, quite properly, the anime robot was shown to work best as a tool to further human goals.

DOUGRAM was Takahashi's first step into this philosophical territory, and he was about to take a bigger one.

"After DOUGRAM, I wanted to write a fantasy," Takahashi said of that time, "and I wanted a world in which robots were not unnatural, but that was difficult to combine with a fantasy story and I didn't want to copy DUNBINE...so I changed my plans and created VOTOMS."

This new series, released by Nippon Sunrise, broadcast from April 1983 to April 1984. Its ratings were not phenomenal at the time, but VOTOMS' popularity virtually exploded over the following years as spin-offs emerged, both on video and in print. Today, VOTOMS rivals GUNDAM in its scope and complexity, giving rise to the suspicion that it was a series ahead of its time.

Part of the reason for its latent success was the meticulous planning that went into the program form the beginning, especially when the limitations of the television medium were confronted.

"In TV there is always the possibility of cancellation," Takahashi observes, "so we divided the story into several parts (to present variety) and left gaps that gave us the opportunity for future stories."

He started with an intriguing premise: if a soldier knows nothing but war all his life, what happens to him when the war ends and he must rejoin society? At first, Takahashi reasoned, some would find simulation of war in a battle ring, like a wrestling match, and over time and after seeing many people and places, the soldier would become rehabilitated.

The soldier Takahashi had in mind would become Chirico Cuvie, but many other elements would be developed before his saga could be fully realized.

Takahashi was envisioning the setting for his story and was strongly influenced by the 1982 film BLADE RUNNER. Co-writer Soji Yoshikawa remembers him considering the inclusion of a replicant-like being, and things began to fall into place.

"There were discussions at NIPPON SUNRISE at that time about different ways to operate a robot and whether it was enough to have ordinary human ability. Our Perfect Soldier concept arose from that".

With this as a catalyst, Takahashi was given to build Chirico's character from deeper observations of war in general.

"There will be war," Takahashi says, "as long as there is a tendency in people to either dominate, or want to be dominated."

Raymond P Compiglio (Order #22181648)

He explored this peripherally in DOUGRAM but, as he admits, the viewpoint was too broad and the characters not strong enough.

"In VOTOMS, the camera is more intimate and concentrated on the hero. I wanted him to have a strong personality, but refuse to dominate or be dominated."

Together, Takahashi and Yoshikawa forged ahead with the first part of the story. As they progressed, they found Chirico's character too strong to remain bound to one place, so as locales changed, the focus of the story drew tighter as well. But, incredibly, they still had not thought of an ending.

Story writer Toji Gomu recalls how this problem was dealt with:

"Generally, this type of robot anime has an ending figured when we start. But when Chirico's battles were over, how would he fill the void in his heart, or would he have to live on without hope? To answer these questions, I think Director Takahashi prepared the God-story to help Chirico along."

The "God-story" is said to have been inspired by Takahashi's reading of "The Nine Billion Names of God' by Arthur C. Clarke, which involved a gigantic computer of divine proportions. Around this basic premise, Takahashi built the image of the planet Quent, to which Chirico travels in the final segment of the series. Soji Yoshikawa recalls the extensive logic that had to be worked out to maintain the integrity of the story.

"We had to write the history of everything. It was difficult, but if we can make this kind of story, we could even explore the occult, though that would be impossible for TV."

Consequently, they decided not to overemphasize either this or the 'mere human ability' aspect, so as not to drift too far into melodrama. But what they did create inspired so much intrigue that the follow-ups have been non-stop since 1984. No less than nine video releases (including three originals), a series of sidestory novels called BLUE KNIGHT BERSERGA, an OAV 'sequel' series, ARMORED HUNTER MELLORINK, and numerous books have carried the world of VOTOMS far beyond its original premise.

Takahashi went on to create many other successful anime series including VIFAM, GALIENT, and SPT LAYZNER, but many still consider VOTOMS his masterwork and although it seems easy to categorize as 'serious robot anime,' Takahashi reminds us of its sentimental ending.

"A happy ending is not a probable one in a series like this - after all, we wouldn't want to see someone like Chirico raising a family." Conversely, it wouldn't necessarily be a good thing, for example, if the heroine were to meet a tragic end, so the story ends as it does.

Perhaps Ryosuke Takahashi got to write his fantasy after all.

To be continued in issue #3.

CHARACTER DESIGN

Norio Shioyama

Having worked under veteran character designer Soji Yoshikawa on DOUGRAM, Norio Shioyama was given the task of designing the VOTOMS characters on his own. From the beginning, Shioyama wanted to design Chirico Cuvie on the basis of his disposition.

"I first imagined Chirico as a boy whose mind was damaged by the war. As he met many people and experienced many things, the wound heals."

And, conceptually, the look of the character would soften to reflect this as the story progressed. As the project evolved, however, the character became slightly less severe and more mature-looking, also allowing a greater range of expression.

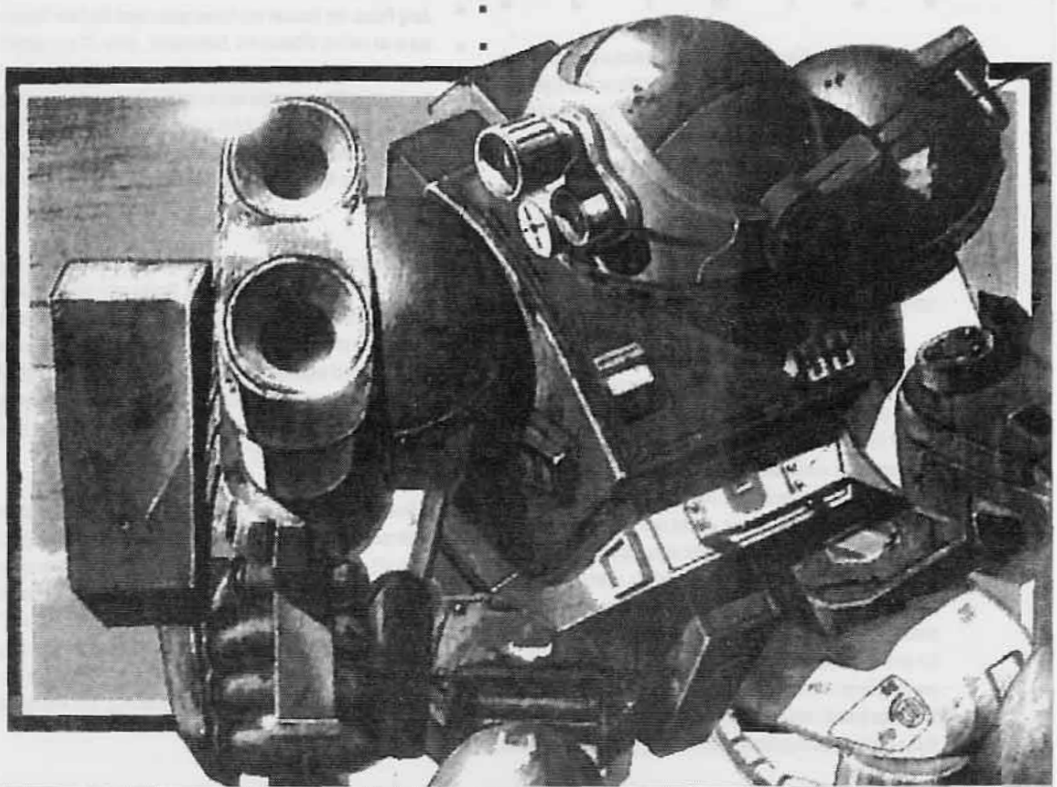
This differentiated Chirico from, for example, a supporting character like Vanilla, who does not require an extensive facial vocabulary and thus can look severe in any instance.

Fyana, on the other hand, required a different design approach. Shioyama wanted her P.S. nature to set her above ordinary humans, so he originally wanted her to possess a regality or divinity.

As the character was written into more and more action scenes, it became necessary to toughen her up for practical reasons, but the original impetus is still apparent, especially in her depiction in THE LAST RED SHOULDER.

Shioyama shared key animation duties on VOTOMS with Moriyasu Tanikuchi, who would later design characters for SPT LAYZNER, but the videos released since the series ended have been all Shioyama, epitomizing the characters' appearances at their best.

Shioyama has since gone on to design characters for GALIENT and SAMURAI TROOPERS as well as illustrations for various VOTOMS books and posters.



Raymond P. Campopiano Owns #3316163

GUNBUSTER

by Martin Ouellette

GLIMPSE

OOOOH! How cute! Giant robots and cute hysterical girls defending the earth from onslaught of the giant space cockroaches! Entertaining, no? The entire story revolves around Noriko Takaya (or Takaya Noriko for the purists) the rather misty minded daughter of a famed captain of the earth space force ship, the Luxion. The poor kid suffers bad treatments from her teachers, from life in general and above all, from her classmates. Her grades suck and she can't even pilot her RX machine the right way! Luckily she becomes friend with a senior student named Kazumi Amano, who is the best pilot in the whole school.

But even then she thinks her life is a living hell. Poor girl! She doesn't know what real hell is until the new RX machine coach (a rather tough, one-eyed bastard who served with her dad) chooses her as one of the two trainees (the other one is Amano) for the new Gunbuster! Her classmates torture her both psychologically and physically until she begs to the coach for relief. This guy, a real sweetheart, tells her that she's a witless nerd and shows her what Amano has to do to be the best RX pilot of the school (that sequence is, how could I say, so "Goody too shoes" it's nearly sickening!). Noriko, all inspired, decides to submit herself to the coach's special treatment (not those treatments, you pervert!) and becomes the best RX pilot after Kazumi (after a lot of Rocky-like jogging runs, thank you) only to get challenged by a senior girl who's really unhappy that the former school nerd got the big brake she had been waiting for. At first, a totally screwed up Noriko gets the living daylight pounded out of her but then remembers the coach's lessons and executes the mighty "Thunder Kick" (you need to scream when doing it, very important) and manages to win hands down, leaving a nice footprint on the other mecha's chest. What an ending. (Well, it's not really the end. This is only episode 1. There are 6 of them.)

STORY WISE

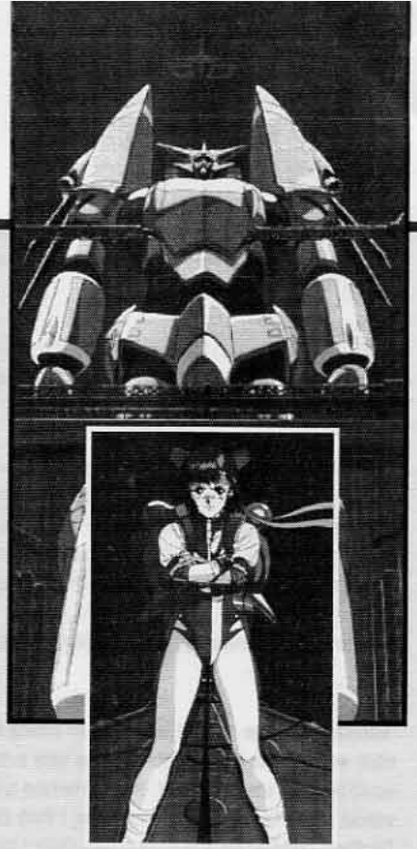
All of this sounds a bit ridiculous, doesn't it? Some of the scenes are tough to catalog. Are you supposed to laugh or be gripped by the action? Could it be both at the same time? Well, it sure looks like it! The fifth episode really shows the ambivalence of Gunbuster. Noriko and Kazumi are fighting the biggest battle of their lives, a battle they must win if the human race is to survive. The battle is epic, nearly tragic but the weapons they use are so powerful they seem to come right out of "Ultraman" or so ridiculous you almost roll on the floor with laughter. The Buster Shield (remember, scream at the top of your lungs when you say it!) is of the latter category. It's not a shield, it's a cape! Exactly the same as Count Dracula or Darth Vader! There's the Super Thunder Kick (once again, if you want it to work, scream!) with the rotating blades under the Gunbuster feet. You should see the swath this is making through the enemy fleet! Talk about massive destruction!

All this action is fine but Gunbuster's good point isn't only that. Mostly, it's the story. It is not very innovative but its treatment really is. Mixing humor, tragedy, SF, mecha and a Rocky type plot, it gives the O.V.A. a strength that is unfortunately absent from many new animations. The characters created by Haruhiko Mikimoto (yes, yes, the creator of Minmei...) manages to make you believe that they are real. Although Noriko is the principal character, I personally prefer Kazumi Amano (also known as the "Rose Queen") both for the way she handles things and her calm, simple beauty. Noriko, very unsure of herself, becomes friends with her. From that point on, Kazumi's and Noriko's destinies are bound.

Jung Freud, the Russian red-haired green eyed Machine Weapon ace is an entirely different fox. Enthusiastic, show-off and dangerously sexy, her first encounter with Kazumi is less than friendly, to say the least! You can nearly see the sparks fly when their eyes lock in a silent combat. But all of this is a test and Jung soon becomes Kazumi and Noriko's best friend, even if the competition between them remains ferocious (for the Gunbuster, for the coach, for the flash, etc.)

The emotional pressure those girls are under is truly terrifying. Due to the relativity (light speed and all), Noriko ages much (much!) slower than the people she knows, or knew... In episode 5, she meets Kimiko, one of her best friends. They used to be the same age when going to school together. For Noriko, only six months have past but for Kimiko, it's been 10 years! In episode 6, Kazumi has aged 15 years while Noriko is only 6 months older! And Kimiko's little girl (who calls Noriko "auntie Noriko") is now the same age as Noriko!

At the end, when the invaders are finally destroyed after a monstrous battle around the Buster Machine #3 (I still can't believe how big this thing is!), the two women (Noriko and Kazumi) go back to earth. There's only one slight problem: it took them 12,000 years to come back!! But still the planet salutes them with a "WELCOME HOME" written in lights all over its surface! The two now legendary warriors go back to a world they will hardly recognize (12,000 years is a very long time socially and technologically speaking), thus ending the story on an incredible note.



TECHNOLOGY

Until now, we have talked about the story and characters of Gunbuster but we left out another very important side of it: its technology! Never before has such a mix of reality and fantasy been made. The creators of the animation revived an old theory named "Ether space theory" that disappeared after Einstein's relativity theory began to be accepted. The Ether space theory as proven false but in Gunbuster it is proven right so the entire plot revolves around it. The Tannhauser Gates which have been proven impossible by science, are a big part of the technological side of Gunbuster as well.

If we go to the mecha designs, many people will say "Oh yuk! They're so ugly". Yes, it's true, they lack grace, beauty and certainly don't have the aura of machines like the Gundam, Mortar Headds (from Five Stars Stories) or the Valkyries from Macross but the Machine Weapons have something more: they are realistic! No fancy shapes and doodles, all the machinery is covered. A lot of visible machinery looks cool, but a combat machine shouldn't have its vital components exposed, right? The only problem is the Gunbuster itself. It transforms from two ships to one 200 meters high robot with the most ridiculously powerful weapons ever made. So what? It looks good and it does its job, doesn't it? Let's not say "Gunbuster doesn't have a good mecha design just because the machine itself is a joke". Let's not forget the RX Machine Weapon Suits which are, as I said before, relatively realistic. The ships are very interesting too, maybe a little big (like 7205 meters long for the Exelion flagship!) but they need to be if they are to face the greatest menace for the human race ever: the STMC, Space Terrible Monster Crowds, monstrous space insects which eat planets for dessert!

In the end, only the massive Buster Machine #3 can save the earth. When it detonates, it creates a black hole and the entire (and I do mean the "entire") insect fleet (and I suppose species as well) is destroyed. Gunbuster is indeed a parody on the excess of past Japanese animation technology!

Raymond P Compiglio (Order #22181648)

THE ANIMATION

Gunbuster's animation is wonderful! It is smooth, with a lot of attention to the details like the cockpit displays. The movements of various objects (Eh! Eh!) are truly lifelike. This should not surprise anyone since it was made by Gainax, which brought us "Wings of Honneamise" among others. Hideaki Anno directed the artwork and the mega-popular Haruhiko Mikimoto worked on the character designs (those two are certainly responsible for the popularity of Gunbuster). The colors, as always in the products from Gainax, are vivid and the entire feel of the animation is that of excitement.

As everyone knows, US Renditions have made a subtitled version of Gunbuster and they did an incredible job (thanks, David and Robert!). It has a perfect recording quality and is definitely a high quality professional production. So is the translation and subtitling. The viewer can follow the story very easily without missing any part. The subtitles are clear, well timed and are scarcely disturbing.

I highly recommend you to buy this animation. It is well worth the price (less than 40$ US, for one volume containing two 25 to 30 minutes episodes). If only for Mikimoto's designs and the hilarious science forums between the episodes.

PATLABOR MODELS' REVIEW

by Marc-Alex Vézina

The Mecha Model column will be a regular feature in Mecha-Press: each issue, we will either present an evaluation of some of the many kits available on the market, or a special "Tips and Tricks" column dedicated to one specific project.

The evaluation of model kits will often be the focus of the article; conversions and scratchbuild models take quite some time to build, and even longer if you are taking notes and pictures of the project for an article. We will try, however, to include as many small and fun conversion projects as possible.

EVALUATIONS

The evaluation of a model kit is a very subjective thing: everyone will look for different aspects, liking this, disliking that. We decided to go for an evaluation table that contains five criteria: looks, mobility, details, molding and options.

Looks is simply how good the model looks, and how "accurate" it is. Mobility is self-explanatory, and so is Details. Molding describes the precision of the molding and the fit of the parts. Finally, Options covers everything else: decals, optional parts, weapon selections, and so on.

Each criteria is rated on a scale of zero to five, five being the highest rating possible. All five criteria are averaged to give an overall rating. Then, depending on the overall impression of the kit, it is rounded up or down to give a final appreciation rating.

Since we are all experienced modelers here, this appreciation represents the amount of work required to build a contest grade model: thus, a five-pointer can be built right out of the box, while a one-pointer will require months of work and extensive rebuilding. This is not really a bad thing, but can be annoying sometimes. The only models we really cannot recommend are the ones with a zero-point appreciation: those are marked with an X, and are better left on the shelves.

PATLABOR MODEL REVIEW

These are excellent models: they are moulded in two colors, with occasional clear parts. The moulding is crisp, with little flash. The plastic is of very good quality, neither too hard nor too brittle. The locator pins actually align the parts correctly for as close to a perfect fit as we have ever seen.

The Labors' cloth joint covers are simulated with flexible latex sheaths in which holes have to be cut for the assembly pins. Because of these latex sheets, the models are build around an articulated skeleton, giving great super-detailing and dioramas possibilities.

One big deception is the markings. Although very cleanly and beautifully printed, as is the case with many Bandai models, they are not decals but thick (and to us very unappealing) stickers. We do not know why the stickers have been substituted for decals in recent years, perhaps because they are easier to apply, but the result is definitely less aesthetic.

NAME: AV-98 INGRAM
SCALE: 1/60

The Ingram is moulded in white and black plastic, with a clear green face plate and red warning lights. Although each box contains the parts to build either the Ingram 1 or 2, only the markings for one version is provided. The model includes a small handgun, a riot rifle (shotgun) and an optional stun stick.

The Ingram may be the worst kit in the series. The latex sheaths are too thin and tend to tear; also, normal model paint doesn't stick to them. The torso to hip joint is poorly done, and the hands are quite simply horrible. However, the fit is good, and mobility is above average.

Appreciation: ***

NAME: SEE TYPE 7B/2B BROCKEN
SCALE: 1/60

The Brocken is a superb kit, molded in blue and dark gray. The molding is crisp, with well detailed parts. There is no interference between the various limbs and the hands are quite good. It has a selection of two weapons and hands to hold each of them, although they do not quite grip them firmly. One of the best in the series.

Appreciation: ***

NAME: ARL-99B HELLDIVER
SCALE: 1/60

The HellDiver is green and gray, with a clear blue face plate. It can be fitted with an optional jump pack that has rockets and a folded parachute. The legs also have opening dive aerobrakes that display the local internal structure and systems.

The kit itself has few problems. Where the latex sheaths are concerned, do not cut the arm covers as indicated. Cutting along the moulded line will result in the covers constantly popping out at the shoulder. To prevent this, one should cut the top in a similar pattern as the bottom, and square out around the middle, where it must clear the shoulder joint.

The thigh armor interferes slightly with the otherwise excellent mobility. The palms of the hands are hollow, but it is an acceptable defect. A very nice model.

Appreciation: **

NAME: AV-02 TYPE-0 PROTOTYPE
SCALE: 1/60

The Type-0 is a very good looking model, with a big shield and an optional extended arm. Molded in white and black plastic with green and red clear parts, it has exceptional mobility and is a really good looking model.

Appreciation: ***

NAME: SCHAFT TYPE J-9 GRIFFON
SCALE: 1/60

The Griffon, although it is the best looking model, it is also the least mobile. It has so many fairings that they constantly interfere with each other. In addition, the joints are looser than on others of the series, which coupled with the resistance of the latex covers, makes the arms want to remain straight and the legs constantly buckle under the weight of the model. The source of this weight is the flight pack, which also makes the model difficult to balance and prone to topple over.

Appreciation: **

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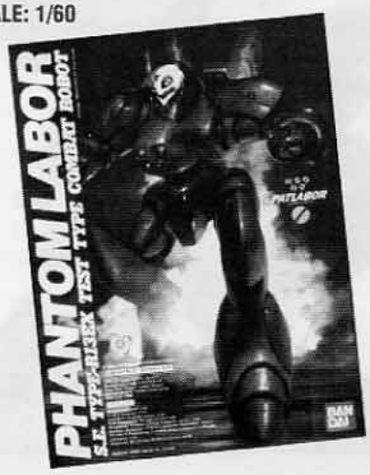
NAME: SCHAFT RX-13EX PHANTOM
SCALE: 1/60



The Phantom is one of the best models in the series. Molded in purple and gray, it is very mobile and stable, and has optional parts for opened or closed backpack jets and torso. Its hands are the best we have seen, only requiring a little sanding around the thumb to look perfect. The only big problem we can find with this model is that the feet don't have the mobility to compare with the hips, limiting the posture envelope that can be attained.
Appreciation: *****

NAME: AV-98 INGRAM, "ALPHONSE SPECIAL"
SCALE: 1/60

The Alphonse Special is little more than a re-issue of the original Ingram model, but it does have a few extras. For one, new and improved hands have been added, along with the Ingram #3 head, shoulders, markings, and the extended arm to reach the stored pistol.

The command car is included in this kit. It is rather basic, with the topside railings moulded on, but it is there. Two small figures go with the car, but they are poorly done. As for the rest, it is an Ingram after all, and all the problems that come with it are back.
Appreciation: ****

*****	A must for the serious mecha modeler
****	Great model, with few if any defect
***	Many defects, but still a good model
**	Challenge for the model builder
•	Lots of work required to make a nice model
X	Waste of money

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"GUNDAM MS"

Book series

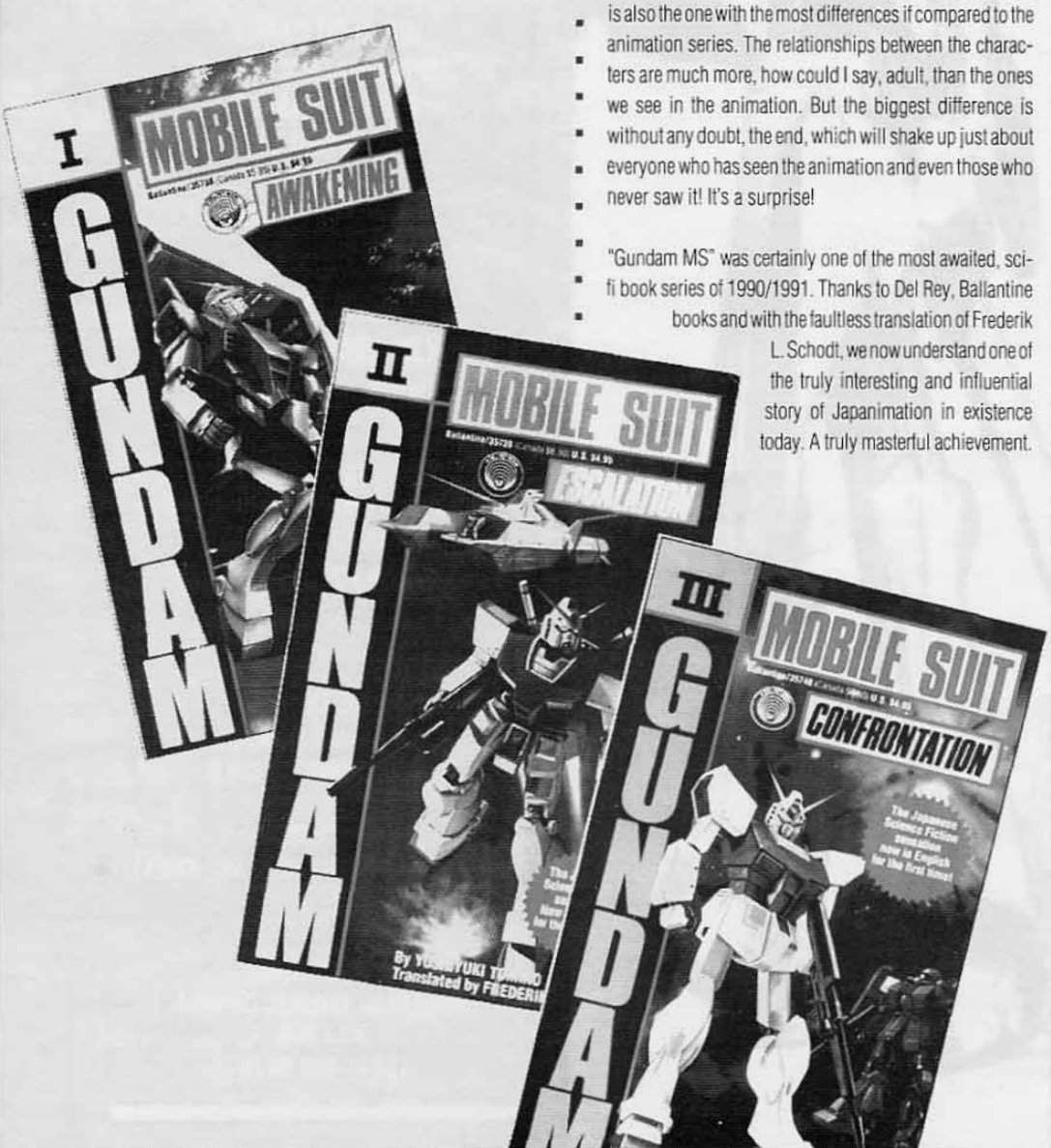
Another publication Japanimation fanatics had been waiting for with big expectations. "Gundam MS" being the first Gundam instalment in English ever made, the excitement was understandable. This is a three books series, which more or less follows the animation series.

The first book, titled "Awakening", deals mostly with the "New Type" theory and the emergence of the New Type potential of Sha Aznable, Amuro Rey (the two principal characters) and the various other characters appearing in the "Gundam MS" saga. Of course the "Mobile Suits" are described (not with sufficient details though) as are the "Minovsky particles" (essential to understand the space combat tactics that are used throughout the books and animation series).

The second book, titled "Escalation" is right on the money, if you want to take a deeper look at the characters' personalities and psyches. There are not as many combats as in the first part but the ones that are there are worth more as far as the use of the "New Type" qualities of the characters are concerned. One reason for this is the training sequence of Sha Aznable's New Type team (who, by the way, are using MS-09 Rick Dom) and Amuro Rey's way of dealing with them in combat. One of the most interesting things about this second part is the way Saila Mas and Amuro Rey's love affair develops into an important aspect of "Gundam", showing how much two "New Types" can understand each other in the deepest level of consciousness.

In the third book titled "Confrontation", we see the action from Zeon's side (while the precedent ones showed mainly the Federation's side), exploring the social and military systems of the archduchy. We also see Gren Zavi, treacherous and cold blooded, who will try to kill his own sister, without any remorse or second thoughts. The third book is also the one with the most differences if compared to the animation series. The relationships between the characters are much more, how could I say, adult, than the ones we see in the animation. But the biggest difference is without any doubt, the end, which will shake up just about everyone who has seen the animation and even those who never saw it! It's a surprise!

"Gundam MS" was certainly one of the most awaited, sci-fi book series of 1990/1991. Thanks to Del Rey, Ballantine books and with the faultless translation of Frederik L. Schodt, we now understand one of the truly interesting and influential story of Japanimation in existence today. A truly masterful achievement.



"0083: STARDUST MEMORIES"

Following the realistic style of "0080: War in the pocket", "Gundam 0083: Stardust Memories" has just come out as an O.V.A.. Strangely, "Gundam F91" has been out for a few months already. I should say that we're spoiled but really, we're not: read the F91 critic and you'll know why. If I ever hear someone compare "0083" to "F91", he or she will eat my socks. "0083" is so superior to "F91", it's like day and night. Let's just take the characters. In "F91", Seabook Arno gets in the Gundam, closes the cockpit and Wham! Bam! He's a Gundam pilot! This guy has never even piloted a Mobile Suit in his life! And worst of all, he actually manages to zap every Cross Bones Vanguard Suit in the vicinity. Quite a guy!

Now for Kou Uraki, the Gundam pilot of "0083". First of all, he's a military Mobile Suit pilot. Two, he's scared out of his mind when Anavel Gato (the bad Zeon guy) piloting the GP02, bears down on him like a ton of bricks and nearly manages to waste him in a very inelegant way. Three, he's not a very good pilot and often makes big mistakes (just like Amuro Rey) that make his life a living hell. Realism is the difference between "0083" and "F91". No matter how much flash "F91" has, "0083" always (in my case anyway) manages to be a step ahead all the way (except for some of the Mobile Suit designs but that's a matter of taste) with its mix of realism and science-fiction, believable mechas and, most importantly, characters with depth and personality.

"0083" is the rightful successor of the "Gundam" name and we sincerely hope that the series will meet the popularity it so strongly deserves. By the way, "0083" was written by Yoshiyuki Tomino. Maybe that's why the "Gundam" flavor is so strong!

APPLESEED

Review of Book 4

Book 4 of the now famous "Appleseed" is the most recent chapter of Shirow Masamune's masterpiece manga to reach us in English via Eclipse comics. It should be said that Book 4 doesn't show any political or personal evolution in the story. Instead of the usual "Life in utopia" direction, Shirow presents the professional life of Deunan Knute (A.K.A. "Darling Deunan") and Briareos Hecatonchire, two of the toughest characters to ever grace the pages of a manga. A professional life an everyday cop would be terrorized by! Running around in totally nutzoid land mates (powered armor suits) while being fired upon by equally nutzoid combat cyborgs and freaked out mercenaries certainly can't be called an ordinary everyday cop job! In Book 4, the story suffers a little because of the straight police action theme but the precision in tactical and technical details is so fascinating that it more than makes up for it. We can now understand why Briareos is so cool headed (a freaked out idiot would be dead in a second in his line of work!) and Deunan so paranoid (paranoia is important if she wants to survive). An important detail concerning our Darling Deunan: she loses an eye during a training exercise! But she now wears an eye patch which gives her an even more ferocious look!

On the graphic side, Book 4 is the most interesting so far, with a technical precision that an engineer would envy. But we should point out the fact that the action scenes are even more confused that before (to the point of sometimes being totally incomprehensible!) But they are so exciting to look at that we can forgive Shirow for that little weakness. The characters have also evolved, physically speaking (in Book 4, there's no personal evolution whatsoever). Deunan is even more beautiful (even with the eye patch, she's a knockout!), Briareos now wears during operation times a land mate especially modified for him (with decorative plumes on the head!). Secondary characters also have a large place in Book 4: Fang, Morton and Magus (Book 3) Lance and Nike (Books 1, 2 and 3). There is also a very funny appearance by our good friend Sokaku (the cyborg explosive specialist from Book 3). But Athena, one of the most important character in Appleseed is left out for Book 4. One of the best Japanese comic ever made, Appleseed deserves the attention of every manga lover (even if it's only for Deunan's presence!).

"GUNDAM F91"

A new Gundam instalment has been out for a few months now, called "Gundam F91" (Formula 91). My first taste of it was a small publicity at the end of the "Gundam 0083" O.V.A. It looked just great, the music was very good and the mechas' design was awesome. I was extremely pleased and enthusiastic about it. Imagine! A new Gundam film! So when someone told me: "I've got a copy of it", I nearly blew up! My enthusiasm began to inflate! And deflate very fast. What a let down! My personal opinion: it doesn't even reach "Nu Gundam: Char's counterattack" shoulders. Frankly, as far as I'm concerned, much of the action was too farfetched.

The characters of Seabook and Cecilia are alright, as well as some of the others (like the guy with the eye patch in the Cross Bones Vanguard). But what are all the kids doing there? That guy with the glasses looks like he's straight out of Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles! The character that truly bothered me the most was the idiot with the metal mask. Was the mask really necessary? Some of the technical details were also annoying, like the weird flower-mecha at the end of the movie. It looked like something out of Ultraman or Mazinger, not Gundam! There were some very good points to the movie, like the animation, which is first class all the way. The mobile suits are absolutely amazing to look at (the models are truly a marvel of craftsmanship, thank you Bandai!) and the combat scenes are truly breathtaking. The soundtrack is also very good.

But in the end, the movie was just too farfetched and did not hold water compared to the other Gundam series, especially "0083: Stardust Memories". All in all, not a bad movie but a misdirected one. Next time less flash and more realism will be just fine!

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Brought to you by U.S. MANGA CORPS and U.S. RENDITIONS. Masamune Shirow's third work has just been added to 1991's releases. The story of a futuristic police tank unit that battles two genetically engineered cat-girls who are trained as ace commandos! All the best elements of Japanese animation brought together by Masamune Shirow!

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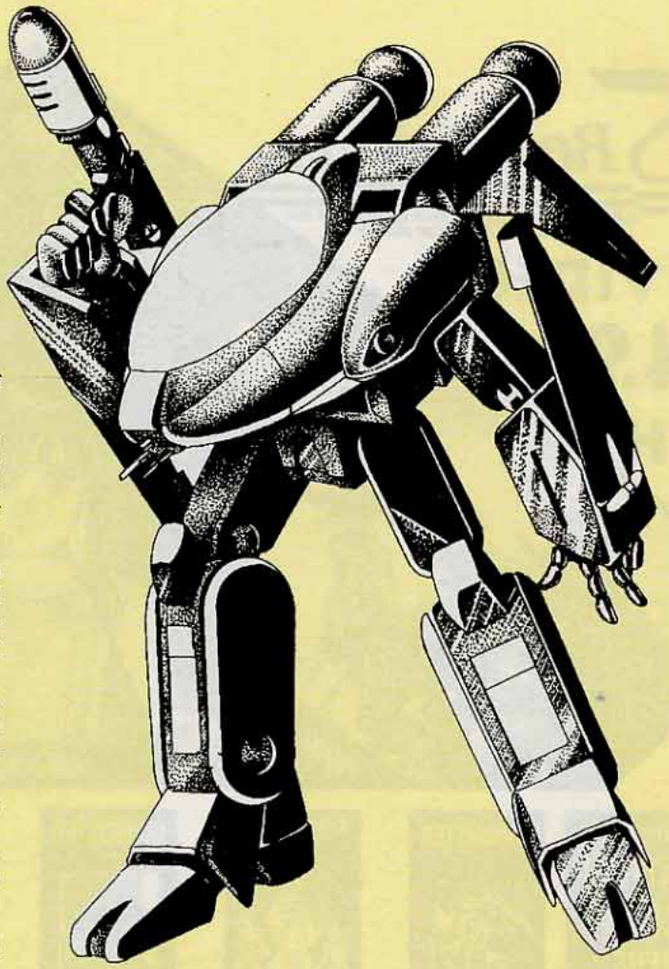
ROBOTECH™: Southern Cross on videocassette



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The Robotech Masters invade Earth! The Armies of the Southern Cross rise to valiantly meet the challenge of this new alien attacker, but are not prepared for the superior firepower and advanced robotechnology at the fingertips of the maleficent Robotech Masters.

The most notable characters include **Dana Sterling** (Max & Miriya Sterling's daughter), **Bowie Grant** (the younger brother of Claudia Grant of SDF-1 fame), the cyber-punk **Louie Nichols**, the tough **Nova Satori**, the fatherly **General Rolf Emerson**, the bellicose **Supreme Commander Leonard,** and the enigmatic **Zor Prime** (a clone of the original Zor!).

Mecha includes the **Veritech Hover Tank, Veritech Copter, Veritech Logan,** as well as other war vehicles, jets, spaceships and battloids! Lots of great fight sequences in space and on the ground! **The Robotech Masters' troops** include the cold and evil Masters, themselves, the strange mistress of the Cosmic Harp and a legion of new mecha called **Bioroids.** Plus the **Robotech Masters' giant Mothership, Robotech Assault Carrier, Bioroid Hover Sled,** and **Bioroid Terminator!**

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ROBOTECH™: Southern Cross Videocassette Schedule of release

Volume One: Contains episodes **37: Dana's Story, 38: False Start,** and **39: Southern Cross.** Our story opens with the graduation of several new cadets in the Army of the Southern Cross, including Dana Sterling and Bowie Grant. Dana reminisces about how her parents first met and the Macross saga is loosely recapped. But story telling is interrupted by the invasion of the Robotech Masters and ensuing battle with the new alien attackers. Hover tanks and bioroids in action! **Available late October 1991!!**

Volume Two: Contains episodes **40: Volunteers, 41: Half Moon,** and **42: Danger Zone.** More combat and adventure in space and on Earth as the ensuing war begins to heat up. The Masters want something but nobody can figure out what it is. The mystery continues, but spirits are high, the Southern Cross appears to be on a roll. **Available December 1st, 1991.**

Volume Three: Contains episodes **43: Prelude to Battle, 44: The Trap, 45: Metal Fire.** Dana leads her squad into the alien mothership where they experience a number of strange things, encounter Musica, mistress of the Cosmic Harp, and barely escape a trap. civilians are taken hostage and turned into the zombie-like pilots of bioroids. Zor is captured and the mystery and madness thickens. **Available Mid-January, 1992.**

Volume Four: Episodes **46: Star Dust, 47: Outsiders, 48: Deja vu.** Dana continues to exhibit a bit of empathy and psychic hunches and can not shake certain feelings about the captive bioroid pilot (Zor). **Available late February, 1992.**

Volume Five: Presents episodes **49: A New Recruit. 50: Triumvirate, 51: Clone Chamber.** It is decided to induct Zor into the Army of the Southern Cross. A full scale assault is launched against the Masters. Zor, Dana and Bowie get closer to the secret of the Robotech Masters and protoculture. Plus epic space battles! **Available late March, 1992.**

Volume Six: Contains episodes **52: Love Song, 53: The Hunters, 54: Mind Game.** Louie Nichols creates the Pupil Pistol, Dana is involved in more intrigue, while the savage space battle continues, with exciting fight sequences involving the Veritech Copter. **Available late April, 1992.**

Volume Seven: Presents episodes **55: Dana in Wonderland, 56: Crisis Point, and 57: Day Dreamer.** The continues to escalate, with terrible consequences. Zor seems to be going mad, Dana is becoming more rebellious, Bowie finds love and the mystery continues. **Available late May, 1992.**

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